

Reflections from practice using the UK QAA Quality Code as a framework to assist in managing and subsequently closing an International Branch Campus.

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## **Abstract**

This study is based on a single longitudinal live case study of an International Branch Campus

The scope of this study relates to learning lessons from the current literature in relation to International Branch Campuses [IBC]. The review of the current literature allowed me to identify risks based on experiences from my fellow practitioners, which then allowed me to mitigate my own exposure to them. This related initially to the setting up of an IBC and thereafter the delivery at an IBC.

The introduction of a Quality Framework, in December 2012, by the Quality Assurance Agency [QAA] is an independent body whose role is safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK higher education wherever it is delivered around the world. The Quality Framework was a unification of standards across the whole of the UK, whereas previously there were separate systems in England, Wales and Scotland and Northern Ireland. The framework introduced two key new concepts, firstly, a 'risk based approach', the first phase of risk management is risk identification according the Institute of Risk Management and by reviewing existing literature I was able to identify risks from learning lessons from existing case study examples.

The second concept related to quality enhancement rather than just focusing on quality assurance. This encourages a continuous monitoring of processes rather than the previous concept of annual monitoring. This was piloted in the case study example in the form of a lessons learned log which identified risks at the earliest opportunity, which then fed into the Course Journal. A lessons learned log approach allowed students to be engaged in the quality process more and quality became a positive element, looking at what went well, and even better if...mind set rather than ticking a box in relation to compliance.

This research is based in a lived in case study example of an IBC which opened in March 2012, prior to, and the subsequent introduction of the Quality Framework, and illustrates the lessons learned through the first year of operation providing an insight to examples of quality enhancement in relation to pedagogical examples of delivery, content and student engagement. In June 2015 a decision was made to close the

case study International Branch Campus whilst reviewing literature in relation to closing an International Branch Campus there was a gap in relation to 'how to' close rather than providing data on how many had closed [although this appears to be lacking in rigor], and identifying the reasons for closure. This study will illustrate how to close an International Branch Campus using the QAA Quality Framework to ensure that student enhancement opportunities are identified to support student success.

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## Acronym Key

| Abbreviation | Full text                                    |
|--------------|--|
| C-BERT       | Cross Border Education Research Team         |
| CPD          | Continuing Professional Development          |
| DL           | Distance Learning                            |
| GATS         | General Agreement on Trade and Services      |
| GATE         | Global Alliance for Transnational Education  |
| HEA          | Higher Education Academy                     |
| HEFCE        | Higher Education Funding Council for England |
| HESA         | Higher Education Statistics Agency           |
| IBC          | International Branch Campus                  |
| JASB         | Joint Academic Stage Board                   |
| MES          | Mauritius Examination Syndicate              |
| OBHE         | Observatory for Borderless Higher Education  |
| PG Cert/PGCE | Post Graduate Certificate in Education       |
| PRSB         | Professional Regulatory & Statutory Body     |
| SIG          | Special Interest Group                       |
| SSM          | Soft Systems Methodology                     |
| TEC          | Tertiary Education Commission                |
| VLE          | Virtual Learning Environment                 |
| TNE          | Trans National Education                     |
| QAA          | Quality Assurance Agency                     |

## Chapter 1 Introduction

### 1 Focus of the study

A diverse and not always robust body of literature exists in relation to International Branch Campuses [IBCs]. This ranges from data on the number of IBCs, to case study examples of experiences of fellow practitioners, to discussions on managing and operating IBCs. This thesis plans to contribute to this existing literature by exploring the importance of the QAA quality code which was first published for consultation in December 2012. A live case study example of an IBC is used in this study. The IBC opened in March 2012, predating the QAA quality code. My overall aim is to develop my understanding through my lived practice and therefore:

1. To learn lessons from existing case study examples to ensure that the case study IBC develops a strategy to ensure exposure to risk is mitigated.
2. To critically analyse the shift to continuous monitoring implemented by the QAA quality code to identify quality enhancement opportunities.
3. To explore how the QAA quality code can be used when closing an IBC since this is a current gap in the literature.

The first aim is to be aware of previous issues which could impact on the student experience at an IBC. Having identified these risks, it was necessary to put in place control measures to mitigate or remedy the situation occurring at the case study IBC. Literature in this field may be considered grey literature. However it is shared with the community of practice which has been developed by two key bodies, namely the Observatory for Borderless Higher Education [OBHE] and the Cross Border Education Research Team [C-BERT]. The second aim seeks to identify the

Importance of quality, not just in relation to quality assurance but also in relation to quality enhancement. The QAA quality code introduced the concept of quality enhancement, which is new to English HEIs. Scottish HEIs are familiar with it and QAA based its quality framework upon the Scottish system. An additional shift in emphasis within the QAA quality framework is the introduction of a risk-based approach. The QAA quality code within which the case study IBC had to operate has 3 parts: Part A Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards; Part B Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality (more specifically for this study, B10 [Appendix A] Managing Higher Education Provision with others is most relevant). Part C relates to Information About Higher Education Provision. The final aim focuses on operationalising B10 in relation to the closing of the case study IBC. A decision was made in June 2015 to close the case study IBC and this thesis will illustrate how B10 could be used as a framework to ensure that implementing the closure minimised any exposure to risk, especially that relating to reputation, not just of the case study HEI but also, potentially, all UK HEIs.

This research is based on a narrative interpretivist approach, positioning myself as an inside practitioner. This study originates in a personal and academic curiosity concerning IBCs.

When I started my research journey in 2012, my study was going to be based upon opening an IBC outside the UK. This happened in March 2012. Subsequently, I have been able to gain experience of not just opening and managing an IBC. I have also been involved in closing it in August 2016. This was a dynamic situation.

I have been involved with Trans National Education [TNE] since 2004.

Consequently, I was asked to be involved in setting up and subsequently managing

an IBC, which was a new initiative for the UK Higher Education Institution [HEI] in which I am based. My role was twofold, namely that of an academic involved in the delivery of a number of law programmes and that of academic director with responsibility for operational and management issues. My employment was based in a UK Midlands post 1992 university

This is an important area of research not just for myself but also generally for my community of practice, as illustrated by The University of Kentucky White Paper (2007:9):

*‘As branch campuses increase in number in the international market, their experiences will continue to inform discussions of higher education decision makers to make the right choices when considering whether to establish branch campus agreements with partners, governments, educational bodies and corporate entities. Cases studies from real experiences will also provide insights into particular geographical locations and the unique risk implications for those contexts. As the international higher education market reaches saturation points, the continued success of established branch campuses despite the competition may depend on the ability of home campuses to provide the right kind of support and the ability of branch campuses to meet their objectives, manage exposures to risk, and build key relationships with partners on the ground’. (2007:9)*

This quote helped to identify the key aspects which I had to research prior to the opening of the IBC, suggesting the importance of learning lessons from case studies of real experiences in order to identify risk and the need to provide ‘the right kind of support’, which is the key focus of this study. Subsequent to the opening of the case study IBC, a major sector-wide change took place with the introduction by the Quality Assurance Agency [QAA] of a Quality Framework for collaborative delivery, Chapter B10, which introduces a number of new requirements which will be helpful in the management of risks and ensuring that student support is appropriate. This work will

provide an insight for fellow practitioners, illustrating how the theory of the quality framework may be implemented in practice.

In April 2012, the UK government announced major changes which affected international students choosing to study in the UK. The then Home Secretary, Theresa May, confirmed that the 'post study work route' which had previously allowed international students two years to seek employment once they had completed their study at the UK HEI was discontinued. There was also a restriction on the ability of international students to bring their families to the UK whilst they study. This obviously had an adverse impact on the number of international students coming to study in the UK. Additionally, changes were introduced which made it much more difficult for international students to gain a visa to enter the UK. Against this background, the case study UK HEI made a decision to open an IBC in March 2012. That is the focus of this study.

According to Universities UK International, in 2015-16 more students studied for a UK qualification outside the UK through TNE than there were international students studying in the UK. There were 701,010 students studying on a UK TNE programme, 1.6 times higher than the number of international students studying in the UK [2018:2]. This supports the decision to open the IBC and illustrates a shift in student destinations.

## 2. Context of study

This study will focus on how an Academic School [a School of Law] at the case study UK HEI engaged both strategically and operationally in designing, validating and delivering a series of undergraduate and postgraduate law programmes at the newly created IBC.

To do this it is necessary to consider what steps must be considered in providing education in an international location by a UK HEI. To this end there is a need to consider what is meant by 'internationalising' education. More recently, this has developed into consideration of 'globalisation' and its impact on HEIs.

It could be said that making our programme curricula more international may attract more international students which, in the current economic climate, with the capping of home student numbers, is becoming increasingly important. The international student market is predicted to be worth £20 billion by 2020 Shiel (2006). This is too large an area to look at in detail so my main focus is the link between internationalisation and a branch campus, looking at how to identify an appropriate curriculum design and pedagogy. It has therefore been important to consider key writers – Altbach (2007, 2010), Pyvis (2011), and Shams and Huisman (2014) – looking at what they say about ensuring the relevance of the programmes to students studying at the IBC, whether they are from that jurisdiction or further afield.

Lessons learned from this initiative should provide valuable practical advice, following on from the work of Boteju and Burnapp (2011) with a Good Practice in Educational Partnerships Guide. Since the quality framework has changed with a new framework introduced from 2013, this is an evolving and important area. The

concept of learning lessons was an important milestone in my research. If I could learn from others, then I trust that they could learn from my experiences.

### 3. Relevance of this area of research

There has been a growth in the number of IBCs which increased by 26% between 2010 and 2015 (all providers). This is an area of interest to practitioners who are already experienced in this area and to those who find themselves thrust into it.

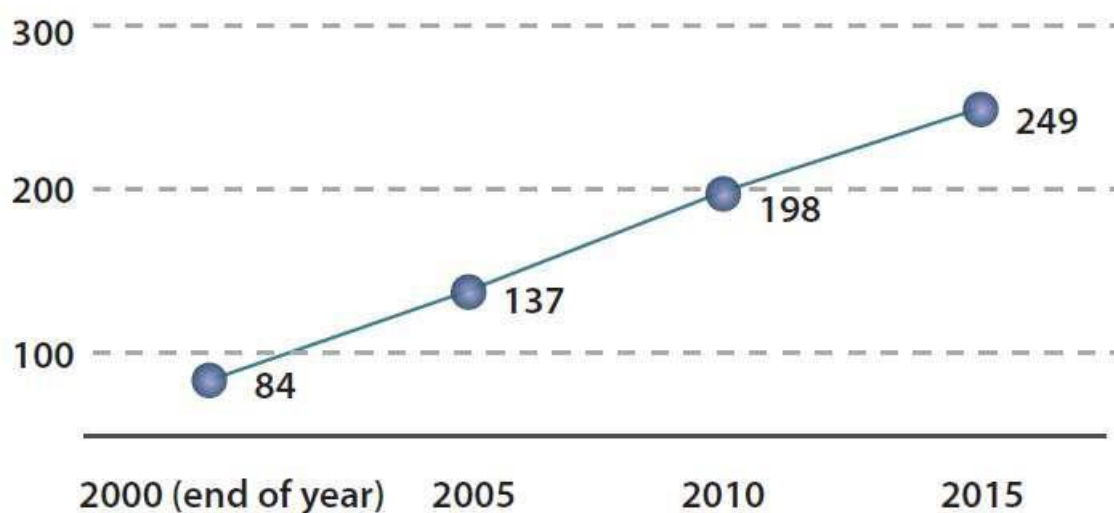


Figure 1 Garrett, Kinser, Merola (2016) Total Number of IBCs

I gained a valuable insight, when reviewing the existing literature (at the time of the opening of the case study IBC in 2012) for Chapter 2 and looking at the subsequent developments to date. There is lack of clarity in relation to definitions of key principles such as IBC and TNE. This has led to a lack of rigour in data collection, especially in quantitative studies. I therefore became cautious as to how I would



collect data for this study and sought to develop a conceptual framework based upon case study research. Existing frameworks from key writers, such as Yin, Merriman and Stake, provided a clear starting point for my data collection. However, I developed a hybrid using the work of both Yin (2017) and Stake (1995) to provide a robust framework which is suited to my narrative interpretative approach.

#### 4. Research Design

This is a longitudinal case study example and will focus on the following key incidents:

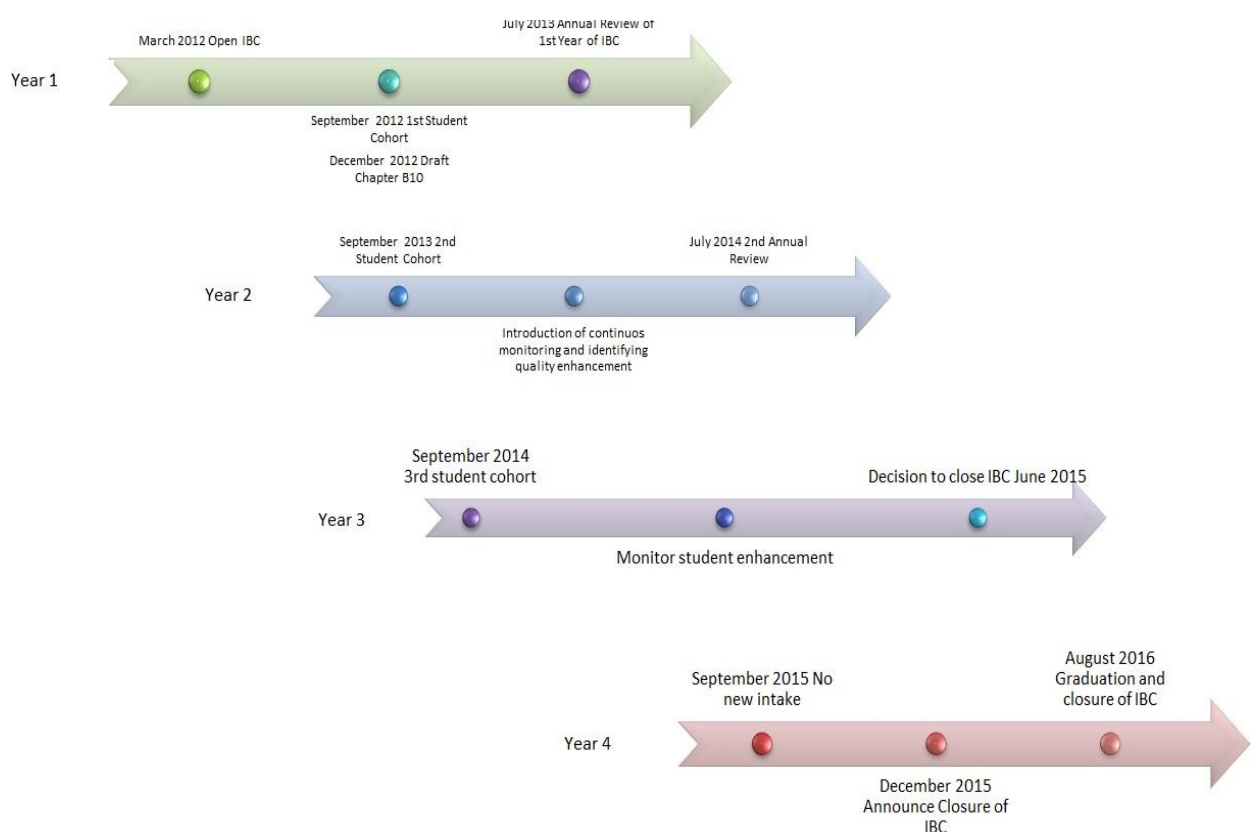


Figure 2 Longitudinal Case Study design

With the introduction of continuous monitoring, introduced as Chapter B10 in the QAA Quality Framework, it became possible to capture information and support not just quality assurance but also a focus on quality enhancement. Through reflection

on my practice I have identified some key incidents over the 4 year duration of the IBC which illustrate the evolving nature of the delivery at the IBC, and the evolving role of the local tutors. Because the case study IBC opened in March 2012 and the decision to close it was taken in June 2015, Year 4 of the study illustrates the operational implementation of Chapter B10, which was used as a framework for the closure in August 2016. This was one of the first IBCs to close post introduction of Chapter B10.

This study will provide an insight as one of the first UK HEI to close an International Branch Campus post introduction of Chapter B10 Quality Code as such this case study example should add valuable knowledge to my community of practice.

## **5. Closing IBC using Chapter B10 as framework.**

Although there is some research relating to closures of IBCs, this is based first on quantitative data which, as stated previously, may be flawed due to the lack of consistent definitions and second qualitative data relating to reasons why IBCs have closed. There is a gap in knowledge relating to closure subsequent to the introduction of Chapter B10. This study will allow fellow practitioners to gain a valuable insight from an insider practitioner who 'lived through' the experience. I share examples of lessons which can be learned with a focus on enhancement, even at the time of closure.

## **6. Reputational Risk**

Another aspect of this study considers how, once the IBC is operating, there is a need to establish how quality is managed to ensure compliance with both local and international descriptors and look at any other stakeholder who should be

considered. Without this, the IBC would not be sustainable since quality is a key component for successful internationalisation at the 2006 British Council Conference, Going Global 2. Additionally, the 'brand advantage' of a UK degree is important and must not be compromised. This has been considered and factored into the case study.

Brand advantage and reputation risk are important factors and one of the issues to be considered is managing students' expectations of an IBC. For example, is it necessary to exactly replicate the student experience of home students? 'Cutting and pasting' programmes from the UK is not necessarily relevant, and therefore sustainable, at a branch campus. My experience has shown that whilst it is crucial to internationalise content it is also important to localise it, to make it relevant to the students. Through curriculum design and delivery patterns, it is possible to achieve this. One of the pressing issues for students at the IBC is what that they 'expect' of tutors from the home university and their local tutors. Clearly, this has potential positives from the point of view of quality control but there is also the real risk of it being cost prohibitive. It is a challenge to balance the delivery of a realistic, cost-effective programme which enhances the student and staff experience.

Consequently this study considers what an IBC is in the context of other TNE models and the importance of the introduction of a risk-based approach with a focus on quality enhancement. Both of these aspects encourage the shift to continuous monitoring, thus providing an opportunity to pilot a Lessons Learned Log to seek to continuously monitor risk and enhancement opportunities at the newly opened IBC. The reason for the closure will not form part of this research but the process of closure is a fundamental part of this work.

Initially, I started to research a wide range of subject matter, seeking to gain confidence in the concept of an IBC within the framework of TNE. A key writer in this area is Healey (2015), whose positioning of IBCs within the TNE framework initially seemed to show a linkage between risk and typographies of TNE. Within his framework, an IBC was low risk. The concept of risk is important sharing momentum with the other aspect which I sought to investigate, namely quality assurance and quality enhancement. It was necessary to position an IBC in comparison with other TNE models. This allowed me to use my previous experience with other TNE models to learn lessons from my own reflective practice. Additionally, it exposed me to the risk of uncertainty relating to the labelling of the models of TNE which had an impact on the reliability of data, especially quantitative data.

Additionally, I was able to add the dimension of how the QAA Quality Framework, with its emphasis on risk and quality enhancement, benefits from the lessons learned from fellow TNE practitioners. Lessons learnt from this initiative should provide valuable practical advice following on from the work of Boteju and Burnapp, (2011) with their Good Practice in Educational Partnerships Guide. Examples of quality enhancement are provided, based on my own reflective practice and interpretivist approach as an insider practitioner in the newly opened case study IBC.

This study uses a case study IBC example to provide examples of the significance of continual monitoring in supporting mitigation of risk and identification of quality enhancement opportunities. In it I will show how our current QAA processes provide a framework which could be used to manage expectations and enhance the quality of TNE provision.

## Chapter 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

The key strands in this chapter are twofold. Namely it will provide an overview and review of the literature relating to International Branch Campuses [IBCs] and the importance of quality relating to them as an entity from the perspectives of initial opening, managing and closing. A number of authors have researched and written on this relatively new phenomenon, each having a slightly different focus, with 2 main research groups. The first comprises writers working with the Observatory of Borderless Higher Education [OBHE], who describe themselves as a 'think tank', originally a collaborative initiative between the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) and Universities UK. The Observatory's membership is currently comprised of 160+ organisational members across more than 30 countries and its writers include Lawton, Katsomitros, Craik, Hill and Garret, who have written 35 articles between 2012 and 2018, including 4 on IBCs. Second is the Cross Border Education Research Team (CBERT), based at the State University of New York at Albany and Pennsylvania State University, with key writers such as Lane and Kinser. The aim of CBERT is 'to provide a robust hub for cross border education'. Recently these 2 key bodies have started to engage in joint research. These two key bodies introduced me to the community of practice which operate in this area.

There are also a number of independent writers, including Ederlein, Gopal, Wilkins and Healey. It is interesting to note that most writers are based in three geographical locations, namely the USA, the UK and Australia. This has provided an insight as to the importance of IBCs and quality which will be investigated.

Prior to reviewing the existing literature I identified what I thought would be some straightforward points for clarification:

1. Defining Trans National Education [herein after TNE]
2. Identifying how many students are engaged with TNE at UK Higher Educational Institutions [herein after HEIs]
3. Defining an IBC
4. Identifying how many IBCs there are
5. Identifying how many students are studying at an IBC.

However, I found it difficult to confirm this basic information. Consequently, this difficulty forms the basis of the introduction to this chapter. I will then investigate the importance and changing view of quality at the time when the case study IBC opened in 2012 and its subsequent development.

Prior to considering IBCs it is important to consider the macro level of international delivery so that it is possible to contextualise the different modes of delivery. As such it is necessary to consider the wider issue of what is TNE?

## **2.2 Definitions**

### **2.2.1 TNE and positioning an IBC within the TNE framework.**

TNE is a niche concept which, in terms of education, is fairly new. Hence, when looking for a starting point definition, one of the earliest came from The Council of Europe Convention (2002 Section 1) which defined TNE as:

*'All types of higher education study programmes, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programmes may belong to the*

*education system of a State different from the State in which it operates, or may operate independently of any national education system.'*

This definition has caused me some confusion. It does not clearly outline potential choices as to how the 'study programmes' could be delivered. For example it does not seem to include articulation or progression agreements whereby students study in their own country for maybe two years and then travel to study overseas at the awarding institution. According to Adam (2001:39) that is not covered and the wide definition above has led to confusion and inaccurate data which will be considered below.

The British Council has provided a summary of TNE in 2013, focusing on the evolution of TNE and showing the development of definitions from 1997, with reference to the Australian Universities Global Alliance of Transnational Education [GATE] which refers to 'national boundaries being crossed by information about education' up to UNESCO/OECD (2005) referring to TNE as 'cross border higher education', following the focus established in Australia but shifting to the terminology of 'cross border'.

There are also national definitions of TNE and again these are provided in the British Council report (2013:13). The most straightforward of these is that from New Zealand in 2007 which defines TNE as 'the delivery of New Zealand formal educational qualifications by New Zealand providers outside New Zealand shores.' This has been simplified. According to McBurnie and Ziguras (2009), TNE involves students remaining in their home country while studying at a foreign university. This is similar to the definition used by the UK Quality Assurance Agency in their 2014 consultation relating to strengthening the quality assurance of UK TNE, which

describes TNE as ‘the provision of higher education for students based in a country other than the one in which the awarding institution is located’. According to Stella (2006), the terms TNE and cross border education are used interchangeably.

Consequently, according to Adam (2001:4), there is no one starting point to understand TNE:

*‘Currently, TNE is an under-researched and often misunderstood area, with no common understanding, definition or approach’*

He goes on to explain that much had been written but very little has been based on ‘hard statistical data’. This has been my experience during my research, mainly due, I feel, to the lack of consistency of definitions and understanding of the modes of TNE. Consequently, when data is collected it lacks integrity. For example, in Australia distance learning is not included in the definition and in Germany joint degrees are not considered to be TNE (British Council Going Global 2013:6) so comparing data internationally has limited value and confirms that the situation described by Adam in 2001 has not improved. Due to the confusing definitions and the data collection processes, caution is needed in relation to quantitative data. Therefore, qualitative data will be the focus of this research to seek to ensure its integrity and value.

A major review of TNE research from 2000–2015 was carried out by Knight and McNamara (2017), confirming that the literature ‘all points to a state of confusion about what TNE means and includes’. Their work is entitled *‘Terminology chaos : working towards a common TNE classification framework’*. This alerted me to the lack of consistency in key terminology which was my first insight into information lacking rigour but also highlighted the importance of clearly managing expectations



so that all stakeholders are aware of what key terminology means. This continues in more recent research by Knight and Liu (2017):

*'The inconsistent use of terms makes comparisons of TNE provision and research within and across countries challenging and often inconclusive. It means that generalisation of research findings is difficult and the analysis of internationally comparable TNE data questionable.'* (2017:15)

The UK Quality Agency [QAA] defines TNE quite simply as:

*'(TNE) Higher education learning opportunities that are provided outside the UK but lead to an award of a UK degree-awarding body.'*  
[2104:Glossary:37]

This simplistic approach is helpful and is the most appropriate for the purpose of my study. Consequently I will now consider the modes in which TNE could be delivered and will reference QAA definitions [https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/guidance/qaa-glossary.pdf?sfvrsn=70cbfc81\\_2](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/guidance/qaa-glossary.pdf?sfvrsn=70cbfc81_2) .

There are a variety of delivery models, including **distance learning (DL)** which, according to the QAA is:

*'A course of study that does not involve face-to-face contact between students and tutors but instead uses technology such as the internet, intranets, broadcast media, CD-ROM and video, or traditional methods of correspondence – learning 'at a distance'. [2014:10]*

Another delivery mode is **franchising** which the QAA defines as:

*'A process by which a degree-awarding body agrees to authorise another organisation to deliver (and sometimes assess) part or all of one (or more) of its own approved programmes. Often, the degree-awarding body retains direct responsibility for the programme content, the teaching and assessment strategy, the assessment regime and the quality assurance. Students normally have a direct contractual relationship with the degree-awarding body.'* [2014:16]

Additionally there is **flying faculty**:

*'(Or 'fly-in, fly-out faculty') An arrangement whereby a programme is delivered in a location away from the main campus (usually overseas) by staff from the degree-awarding body. (Support for students may be provided by local staff.)' 2014:15]*

This macro level of TNE delivery is a necessary precursor to the positioning of an IBC within the TNE framework. The work of Healey (2014) sought to position an IBC within the TNE framework as being low risk, which was interesting since this aligned well with my study in which I seek to find a relationship between an IBC and risk. The introduction to risk within a framework of an IBC provides the next stepping stone and a key link to QAA Chapter B10 which introduced a 'risk-based' approach.

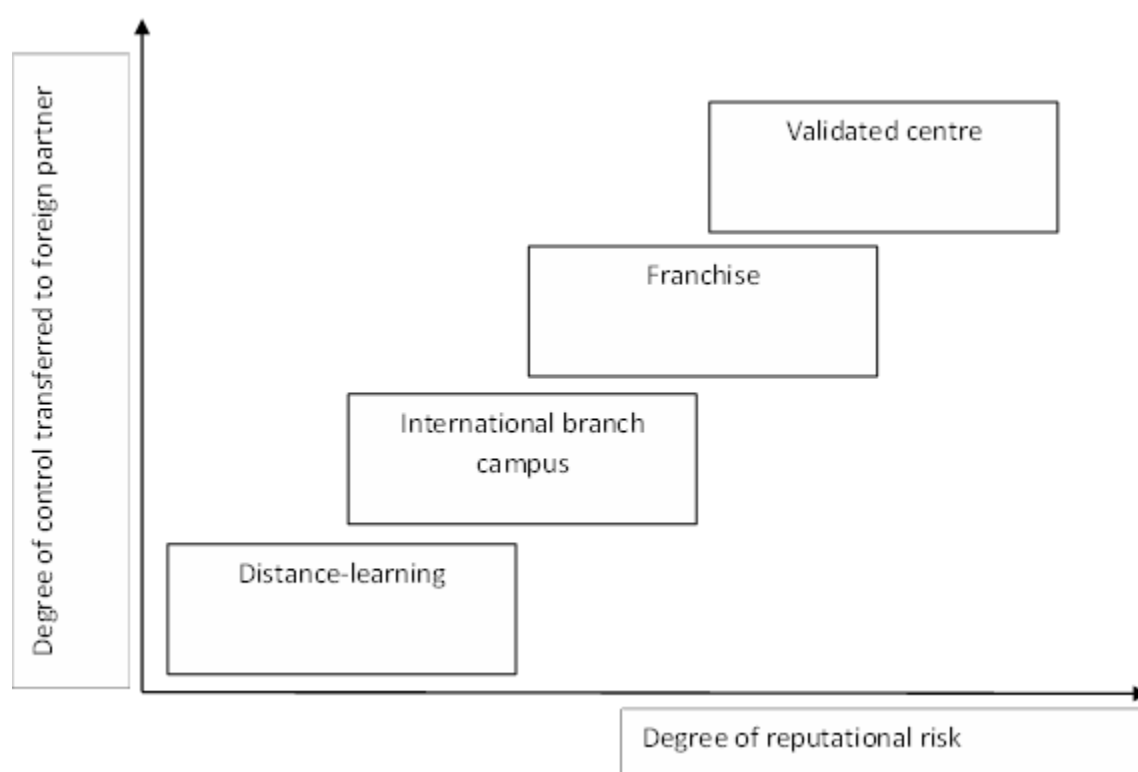


Figure 3 Reputational Risk of IBCs Healey (2014)

However, this is contradicted by Armstrong (2007:137):

*'The branch campus has the largest set of risks. It involves all of the problems of the other approaches, plus the need to interact effectively with many levels of society and government in order to create and sustain the campus. Start-up costs are very high, and recouping initial investment*

*if closure occurs is unlikely. Because of the visibility of a campus, reputational damage can be high if closure is required.'*

It will be interesting from this case study IBC experience to see which interpretation is the most accurate. However, reflecting on what may appear to be contradictory positioning of risks, I consider that when looked at together the emphasis is slightly different in that Healey is looking at control being a mechanism to manage risk, whereas Armstrong is considering that the 'visibility of the campus' draws more attention to presence in the host country. I agree with Armstrong since, in other TNE relationships, the presence of, for example, a UK HEI is not displayed on a large neon sign outside a building. Such affiliations may appear only once inside the partner institution, perhaps on a list with the names of other international partners, so little exposure is given to the overseas presence. Whereas, in an IBC, there are invariably large neon signs around the building, drawing everybody's attention to that presence. Hence, if there is any adverse publicity, everyone in that locality is aware of it.

The UK Government strategy, International Education: Global Growth and Prosperity (July 2013) identified three key drivers for reviewing TNE quality assurance:

1. *The growth in demand for TNE has made it even more important that the UK is able to maintain and demonstrate the quality of its education exports.*
2. *The global growth in UK TNE provision, particularly different models of in-country delivery and the need to comply with local regulatory frameworks, presents increasing assurance complexity and risk.*
3. *Whilst [assurance of quality in TNE] is the responsibility of each individual institution, failure to [provide it] has the potential to impact negatively on every institution.*

The experienced gained from this review of existing literatures is that to focus on the positive action of quality enhancement is helpful and more engaging for academics, hence the need to focus on lessons learned. Having identified some lessons learned

from previous case study examples, I intend to add to the list of risks associated with an IBC and look at them positively, using Chapter B10 to support quality enhancement. This becomes most relevant when looking at the closure of the IBC, an event which potentially has a high exposure to reputation risk and negative student experience.

There is a recurring theme in the literature relating to reputational risk and consequently, this is an area which I will have to consider during my research and planning. There also appears to be a causal link between the perception of quality and reputational risk which I will consider later in this chapter and this is a factor which influences students to choose to study at an IBC, Wilkins & Huisman 2011.

### **2.2.2 How many students are involved in TNE during the period of this study.**

Although there is a lack of consistency internationally in definitions within the UK because of the QAA definitions [as confirmed in the section above], it is possible to have accurate data. The latest data available for the number of students currently studying on a TNE programme offered by a UK HEI relates to 2015/16 when 82% of UK HEIs delivering TNE and 701,010 students were registered with them for TNE provision (2016:2). This data is sourced from a Universities UK International trend analysis of HESA data report entitled 'The Scale of UK Higher Education TNE 2015-16'. This figure is 1.6 times higher than the number of international students studying in the UK, which is suggestive of a shift in study patterns compared to previous years. Due to visa regulations and costs, it is more difficult for international students to enter the UK to study, and this supports the decision by the case study UKHEI to open an IBC.

## 2.3 Policy decisions influencing the growth of IBCs

It is important to consider the motivations present at the time the case study IBC was opened in 2012 in order to understand the importance of the new development.

### 2.3.1 National drivers

#### *Fees*

In September 2010 the UK Government announced that funding for university teaching would be cut by £3 billion a year. This shortfall would be made up by increasing student fees in England and Wales and these have increased from £3,290 each year in 2010 to a maximum capped at £9,000 from 2012. The gap between home and overseas students has diminished with, for example, the average overseas fee level for international students at the case study UK HEI for 2013/14 being £10,240 for undergraduate study, compared to £8,650 for home students. This compares to £3,290 for home and £9,150 for international in 2010/11. This amply illustrates the shifting gap between revenue streams from home and international students. At the time of the opening of the case study IBC in 2012, home students were seen as a much more valuable income stream and this could be seen as a disincentive to resourcing an overseas campus where the fee level would be much lower. Therefore, there may be financial motivation for overseas students to study outside the UK at a branch campus where fee levels are greatly reduced. For example, in the case study IBC the 2013–14 fee was £2,400 each year. This should be considered in identifying the resource implications when setting up the IBC. If the motivation for the case study UK HEI was purely to maximise revenue, opening an IBC would not have been a priority.

### *Student numbers*

When considering UK government policy at the time of opening the case study IBC, it is helpful to review the restrictions on recruitment and increasing student numbers.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England [HEFCE], on behalf of the Government, caps the number of publicly-funded undergraduate places for home and EU students at English institutions. This is necessary to help the Government to control the budget for student finance since students are able to apply for student loans which are only repayable when a certain wage level is achieved.

Consequently, it is not possible to recruit students above the level agreed with the Government without incurring a financial penalty. If universities do wish to increase student numbers, a Branch Campus allows this to happen without incurring any financial penalty and thus increases the financial growth of the institution. There may be some restrictions placed upon recruiting students at an IBC by a Professional Regulatory & Statutory Body [PRSB] as is the case for law students in the case study IBC. This is generally based upon staff student ratios based on recruitment at home and overseas thus ensuring a balanced workload and quality student experience.

### *UKBA*

In 2011 there was a major overhaul of student visas, this may have impacted on the decision to diversify and open an IBC in 2012. Previously students were able to stay in the UK to work post qualification, which was a great attraction for international students. This ended in April 2012. Additionally, greater responsibility was being placed on UK universities to monitor international students to ensure they were actually attending classes and not using student entry into the UK primarily as a way

in before disappearing, perhaps to work. On 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2011 the UKBA stated that 26% of international students could not be accounted for. Consequently changes were introduced. English language requirements were also to be monitored much more rigorously and a new system was introduced. It was therefore necessary for universities to apply for 'Highly Trusted' status which depended on taking extra responsibility for showing there were adequate policies and procedures to ensure that international students coming to the UK to study had adequate finance to support themselves whilst here. It also became necessary to show that students have an appropriate level of English Language to enable them to study successfully in English. Checks have to be in place which enable the university to confidently monitor students' attendance and engagement with their studies and to know where international students are living during their time in the UK. This change was partly motivated by a number of sham colleges to which international students were granted entry for study on courses that did not yet exist. Consequently, it is more difficult for international students to study in the UK and a Branch Campus provides an alternative whereby the stringent requirements of the UKBA do not need to be followed. There is still a requirement that all students have a minimum English Language competence which is in line with the UKBA B2 level.

This shows that, on one hand, UK Government policy supports the importance of UK students as a revenue stream whilst on the other it makes it harder to recruit international students. In order to grow in terms of both reputation and student numbers, opening an IBC could be seen as a lower risk option than other forms of TNE. Binsardi and Ekwulugo (2003) consider the motivations for students wishing to move to UK study and confirm that whilst the quality of education is a factor, so too is the ability to have employment during and after study.

## *Globalisation*

Continuing from the policy discussions above, it is helpful to consider the position when the case study IBC was due to open. In 2011-12 there were 435,230 international students compared with 428,225 in 2010-11 (an increase of 2%), with full-time undergraduate study up 8%. Eighteen percent of all students in the West Midlands [the region where the case study IBC is based] were international students, according to the UK Council for International Student Affairs.

According to the Times Higher Education [T.H.E. Supplement] the days when international students flooded into the UK to gain a UK degree may be over with the dynamic shifting to gaining a UK qualification overseas either at TNE partners or at Branch Campuses. A total of 503,795 students enrolled at British institutions 'studied wholly overseas' in 2010-11, up sharply from 408,685 in 2009-10 and 388,135 in 2008-09.

Being internationally focused is important to both home and international students as confirmed by writers such as Altbach and Knight (2007) and Mellors-Bourne (2017) who confirmed that TNE should benefit all students. It is important that all students gain maximum benefit from their study. The work of O'Mahoney (2014) identified the importance of student engagement in TNE which alerted me to the need to ensure that appropriate systems are in place to engage students in quality assurance and enhancement of their course. With the introduction of the QAA quality framework, Chapter B5 provides guidance on mechanisms to engage students which will assist with this study.



### *Finding the right partner.*

Burnapp, (2011) identified good practice and highlighted the 'ethos' underpinning the planned collaboration as being essential. This entails checking that all partners and stakeholders share the same ethos. The partnership I will be following has been chosen on the basis of a complementary ethos between an educational trust which delivers under 18 education and a UK HEI. The ethos of the trust in the host country is to advance education and relieve poverty, focusing on education as a right for all, not just the privileged few. This fits with the core values of the case study HEI which include being ethical, inclusive, fair and collaborative. The proposed relationship at the case study IBC was that the host country partner, which was already experienced in providing educational opportunities in-country, albeit at school level, would provide administrative support and teaching premises.

Initially the premises were shared with an existing franchised Indian University in an old 4 storey block with a new purpose built block to be constructed as soon as planning permission was granted. This was one of the conditions of the validation.

The UK HEI was to provide the academic qualifications, content, and tutors.

Separate from the academic approval a full Due Diligence process took place whereby financial and other checks are carried out independently from the Faculty to ensure there is no conflict of interest in the new proposed development. Part of the approval process included submitting key documentation relating to justifying the viability of the proposal based on data and a clear commitment from the partner identifying their roles and responsibilities. This is a two stage approach with an initial due diligence considering issues such as legal capacity and financial standing and

ethos, which takes place very early on during the negotiations with a new partner. This basic information enables the Office of the Vice Chancellor to decide if this is someone we would wish to work with, if approved a Memorandum of Understanding is drafted and signed. A further full due diligence takes place once the type of relationship has been identified, the higher the category of risk, the higher the level of the due diligence check.

Indicator 6 of Chapter B10 confirms that appropriate and proportionate due diligence is required. The Definition provided by the QAA (2012:42) as:

*'Enquiries relating to the governance, ethos, status, capacity, reputation and general suitability of a potential delivery organisation or support provider to satisfy the requirements of a degree-awarding body for an arrangement to deliver learning opportunities.'*

Therefore considering the requirement that due diligence is appropriate and proportionate the case study HEI carried out a thorough due diligence process requesting documentary evidence to support each statement made by the proposed partner. Once the documentation was collated and the internal due diligence process was complete, the bundle of documentation was forwarded to an independent law firm who had office's in the UK in the jurisdiction of the proposed IBC to ensure that all aspects of external governance had been considered. Questions raised during due diligence include issues of financial standing, legal capacity, existing record of academic provision and details of the political, ethical and cultural context under which the proposed partner operates, highlighting any issues for the University and its fulfilment of the UK Quality Code. Once this had been confirmed, due diligence as closed out the academic validation process commenced. QAA Indicator 3 makes clear that due diligence should be kept separate from the academic proposal to ensure that there is no potential conflict of interest.

### 2.3.2 Local drivers

#### *Strategic direction of all stakeholders*

A focus for this inquiry is to explore the current context within a case study UK university which has identified the opening of an IBC as ‘...*the internationalisation of learning and value of transferring and sharing knowledge*’ (case study UK HEI website). This research will focus on strategies for managing and leading academic staff in multiple countries and identifying the need for curriculum design to take this development into consideration.

### 2.4 IBC definition

A Branch Campus has been defined as:

*‘an entity that is owned, at least in part, by a foreign education provider; operated in the name of the foreign education provider; engages in at **least some face to face** teaching; and provides access to an entire academic program that leads to a credential awarded by the foreign education provider.’ (Lane 2011:1)*

I consider the concept of ‘at least some face to face teaching’ important in that it excludes a centre which is purely distance learning. However, it does not allow for developments of blended learning and could be outdated. This is further amplified by the more recent definition below by C-BERT in which ‘substantially on site’ replaces ‘face to face’, implying that the physical presence of the tutor is required in the host country. The most recent definition says a Branch Campus is:

*‘An entity that is owned, at least in part, by a foreign higher education provider; operated in the name of the foreign education provider; and provides an entire academic program, **substantially on site**, leading to a degree awarded by the foreign education provider’. (C-BERT, 2017:6)*

Again this is not future-proofing the definition in a context of ever-changing pedagogy.

The term 'substantially on site' will be important when considering the delivery pattern and pedagogical framework to be used at the case study UK HEI.

HESA criteria state that:

*“Overseas campus” means a campus set up as a branch campus of the parent institution. As such it is seen as **no different from any other campus of the institution**. In some cases a commercial partner may actually own the physical structure. However where the reporting institution effectively owns and manages the intellectual operation, this is regarded as an overseas campus of the reporting institution’ (HESA 2012:1)*

This definition raised concerns for me as to how to manage expectations, especially those of the students, if an IBC is to be ‘no different from any other campus of the institution’. This is a very high expectation and somewhat unrealistic. This understanding could have informed QAA report findings when it carried out an in-country review of the United Arab Emirates. The QAA inspection of the TNE offered by UK HEIs operating in the UAE led to an article in the Times Higher Education Supplement (2014) which reported QAA’s warning about IBC definition. Universities must be vigilant ‘about misleading students about overseas facilities’. The basis for the concerns related to there being no real premises, other than an office and rooms rented as needed for classes, with few or no staff from the UK HEI. These are issues which needed to be considered when setting up the case study IBC, “institutions should consider the expectations they are raising in promising a global campus experience”, the QAA warns.

I would therefore suggest that ‘As such it is seen as no different from any other

campus of the institution' is replaced with 'As such it is seen as **equivalent** to any other campus of the institution'.

'Equivalent' would provide students with the opportunity to complete their studies but would not raise expectations as high as expecting the campus to be 'no different from any other campus'. The work of Boteju and Burnapp (2011), although based within TNE, generally supports this view and identifies the need to ensure students are not disadvantaged; it considers this as an ethical issue Boteju and Burnapp reflect on the importance of the 2005 OECD guidelines which remind us that

*'The potential dangers arising from inequalities are equally clearly identified as the reason for needing to create the guidelines: to protect students and other stakeholders from low quality provision and disreputable providers (p3)'. (2011:4)*

The reality is that campuses in the UK have taken many years to develop and evolve. It would be unrealistic on day one of opening a new IBC for it to be as mature. Again, the literature provided me with an insight into this potential weakness which I would need to consider when the case study IBC opened.

The definition which is most accurate to the case study situation is:

*'The sending HEI establishes a stand-alone satellite operation known as an IBC in the host country and is responsible for all aspects of recruiting, admission, programme delivery and awarding of the qualification. In addition to faculty employed from the parent institution, the IBC may employ local and/or international faculty to assist with teaching. Quality assurance of the programme is the responsibility of the sending HEI and is often subject to additional accreditation processes by the host country'. (Going Global 2013:15)*

This definition provides a helpful insight into roles and responsibilities regarding an IBC and is much more of an operational framework. It links to another key concept of quality assurance which I will also need to consider, especially with the introduction

of the QAA quality framework Chapter B10.

The discussion around pinpointing a clear definition says that this is a '*slippery subject*' (Lane and Kinser 2012:2):

*'Colloquially, it is simple enough: IBCs are foreign degree-granting locations of a higher education institution. But in practice, it's not that easy to draw the line. There are many ways for universities to establish a presence abroad, and the IBCs boundary is far from settled'.*

Since the case study IBC was due to open in 2012 this literature was most relevant and also confirmed that the issue of clear definitions was still an issue I should be aware of.

The definition used in 2012 by the case study UK HEI when it opened was:

*'A Branch Campus is a smaller portrayal of the parent campus, usually based in a geographical location that is not in easy/day-to-day commuting distance from its main campus. The branch campus employs staff approved by the University, where employment contracts may need to be agreed by the parent campus depending on local requirements. The Branch campus will recruit students both for the campus itself and also for the parent campus based on the same entry criteria. The mission, ethos/core values and strategy for the Branch Campus are based on the parent campus, but within a localized context. The curriculum of courses delivered at the Branch Campus and decision-making on all academic matters reside with the parent campus as do quality assurance and awarding of degrees powers. Staff based at the Branch Campus will have some autonomy to ensure that the University meets its local obligations and that of the students studying locally'. (UK HEI Strategy Document, August 2012)*

This definition focuses more towards where the IBC fits within the UK HEI structure it is important for my study that the quality assurance resides with the UK HEI. It is interesting to note that there is no mention of quality enhancement, which forms an important shift in emphasis by the QAA in the Quality Framework which was first published in December 2012.

This confirms the status of the case study university as being an IBC within the changing definitions of the TNE framework. The evolving definitions of an IBC have been helpful in highlighting potential areas of concern such as managing students' expectations of what the IBC would look like, and the specifics of how it will offer programmes.

#### **2.4.1 Problems with data in the literature – how many IBCs exist?**

Following on from these issues identified in the literature, this section will consider how robust the data relating to IBCs is since this will impact on my study.

Lawton and Katsomitros (2012:Annex D), in their report which had just been published when I started this review, identified that there were 37 new IBCs due to open by all countries in the next 2 years (namely between 2012–14). This clearly illustrates that this is an important and evolving area, worthy of study, and I assumed that the case study which I was involved in would be one of the 37. However, the case study university was not on the list in Annex D of Lawton and Katsomitros' report of IBCs due to open, and this first alerted me to the potential weakness in the literature in this area. When confirming how many IBCs currently exist, the latest data from the Cross Border Education Research Team [C-BERT] from December 2017 offers a figure of 263, but this included the case study IBC which closed in August 2016.

In 2011 Hudzik discussed these inconsistencies and states that differences between Branch Campuses are so acute that no official comprehensive list of all the Branch Campuses in the world exists, which supports my earlier contention that the confusion over inconsistent definitions leads to data which has little integrity. This follows from Altbach in 2007 who said there were no accurate numbers worldwide.

Whilst this research is focussed on the UK only, it does put into perspective the challenges internationally with this concept.

Unfortunately this lack of robustness appears to continue, and another weakness in the literature I have discovered relates to a lack of rigour in some quantitative studies, including that by C-BERT <http://cbert.org/branch-campus/> which states that, from 1999 until 20<sup>th</sup> January 2017 the number of IBCs which have closed is 42. However, it does not include the case study UK HEI which closed in August 2016; I must therefore question the validity of that study.

## 2.5 Key sources of literature relating to IBCs Data

If the data is taken at face value, there is a much higher proportion of students studying on other modes of TNE, compared to those studying at an IBC, namely 26% [701,010:180,000].

It is interesting to note that O'Mahoney (2014:12) identified Australian academics as being the most prolific published researchers in TNE, with 29 authors. The UK had 7 and the USA 5. I found this a helpful starting point, but in narrowing this down to IBCs the balance shifts, with the US being the most prolific, having authors such as Altbach, Lane, and Lawton; then Australia, with Wilkins being very active in this area; and then the UK, with key writers such as Healey.

I considered this an area which needed closer investigation and that the geographical basis of writers tended to correlate with the number of IBCs which these countries have. According to the 2016 joint report by OBHE and C-BERT:

*'IBCs come from 33 different home countries, an 18% increase from 28 home countries at the end of 2010. The top five home countries, in terms of number of IBCs, are the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, France, and Australia. Together, these countries account for 181 branch campuses, or 73% of total IBCs'. (2016:7)*



However, when comparing the number of IBCs with the number of HEIs in these jurisdictions the order changes as illustrated below from the 2016 joint report (2016:16).

| Country   | Number of HEIs | Number of IBCs | Ratio IBC:HEIs |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Australia | 170            | 15             | 8.8            |
| UK        | 451            | 39             | 8.6            |
| US        | c.4200         | 78             | 1.9            |

Table 1 Joint report by OBHE and C-Bert IBCs and ratio to HEIs 2016:16

I consider this to be a valuable correlation of the research outputs even though statistically the US has the lowest ratio the focus in data always relates to the number of IBCs and as such the US is the leader, however, an alternative indicator based on the ratio above indicates that proportionally Australia and the UK have significantly higher numbers. The ratio confirms that in the US there are many more HEIs in country therefore the proportion of IBCs is much lower compared to the UK and Australia who have fewer in country HEIs as such the proportion of IBCs is much higher.

This again is an indication that quantitative data can be interpreted in many ways and does not always present an accurate picture. Whilst the USA does have the highest number of IBCs and this would therefore account for the proportionally high output of research in this specific area, it has a very low number of IBCs compared to the number of HEIs based there.

Having sought to answer the 'straightforward questions' I set myself at the start of my research journey, I can now identify additional aspects which I must consider before I investigate the next strand of 'Quality'.

Before an IBC can open it is necessary to know that the UK HEI will be able to

provide appropriate support, at a distance and that the programmes offered at the IBC are appropriate. Therefore I go on to consider the importance of internationalisation.

## **2.6. Why is internationalization of the curriculum important to TNE?**

I consider this to be a precursor to TNE, and therefore to an IBC. If the curriculum is not internationalised it has very little relevance to students in other jurisdictions. TNE is increasingly important, according to Naidoo (2009), and an integral part of the internationalisation of higher education (Huang, 2007). In 2007, Teichler and Kehm discussed the impact of the Bologna Process, which is a process of recognising qualifications from other countries which are deemed 'comparable', and the future of internationalisation identifying seven broad themes, one of which related to the institutional strategies of internationalisation and internationalisation of the substance of teaching, learning, and research.

Numerous researchers (Bond, 2003; Knight, 1994, 1997, 2000). Knight (1994) describes the curriculum as 'the backbone of the internationalization process' (Knight, 1994:6) and emphasizes the centrality of the curriculum and the internationalization of the curriculum and teaching and learning processes as critical elements of internationalization. Other researchers support this, emphasizing the importance of an internationalized curriculum in providing a student-centred learning experience for all students and in preparing students to be successful in today's increasingly interdependent global society (Leask, 2001).

The local environment which IBCs operate in is often very different from that of the home campus (Debowski 2003) and as such, consideration should be given to the initial challenges, such as understanding local laws, policies and ongoing

governance. Governance commences at the initial due diligence checks and continues to monitor the quality and sustainability aspect.

### **2.6.1 The balance between internationalised and local considerations of pedagogy and curriculum.**

With an internationalised curriculum, there will be some relevance to students who wish to gain a UK qualification although they are based in a different geographical region. There is a debate amongst writers as to the correct model of curriculum content and appropriate pedagogy.

A key question should be 'Should what is being taught be the same as at the home HEI (which in the case of this study is a UK HEI), or should it be different?' Schapper and Mayson (2004) reference the Monash University model in Australia where the curriculum is 100% identical wherever in the world a student is studying. This, according to the researchers, is motivated by cost rather than by the need to ensure a consistent student experience (Schapper and Mayson, 2004:9)

*'Standardisation of content facilitates the use of flexible learning support materials in a wider range of teaching situations and therefore reduces the average cost of using them. (Monash University, 2003, p. 3).'*

This can only be done if the curriculum from the HEI has been internationalised. As such it should be relevant to all students, irrespective of their geographical location.

The view that the curriculum should be the same is also supported by Altbach (2007) where he says something which resonated with me from my previous TNE experience as he considers how much involvement is needed to call a degree specifically a 'UK degree'. He uses an analogy with McDonalds:

*'To use the McDonald's analogy—is the meal (degree) a true McDonald's hamburger if only the recipe (the curriculum) comes from McDonalds. The rest of the process—the ingredients (facilities) and the cooks (professors)—are local, rather than from the sponsoring institution. Should*

*a university in the United Kingdom (or another country) claim to offer a degree overseas if only the curriculum is from the sponsoring school, perhaps along with an element of quality control?’ (2007:1)*

A key aspect here relates to the curriculum being the ‘recipe’ from the UK HEI.

Subsequently, he seems to have changed his view and says the ‘recipe’ should be relevant to the other country where the students are studying:

*‘Often, the programs that are exported are “off the shelf” offerings designed for students in the industrialized countries. The relevance of such offerings for developing countries is, at the very least, questionable because education is not country neutral. Both pedagogy and curricular content must take into consideration local conditions, traditions, and learning styles. Foreign providers are often unwilling to spend the money necessary to do this’. (Altbach, 2015:4)*

This supports the earlier view of Schapper and Mayson (2004) who also raised the cost implication of changing the curriculum. It is worrying to consider that cost might take precedence over student experience. Altbach also raises the importance of pedagogy, which is an area which must be considered as part of the management of the IBC.

The view that the curriculum should be changed, or contextualised, is supported by the OBHE 2008 report by Helms (2008:25):

*‘Western-ness’ in terms of curriculum, language and teaching methodology is a key factor that differentiates the program from local competitors’.*

although one could consider ‘Western-ness’ as being an internationalised curriculum rather than making changes to the curriculum per se.

I consider this an important precursor to my study of an IBC, since the literature explains why students wish to know what is going on internationally. This understanding can then ensure appropriateness of the offer available to students at the IBC.

Internationalisation of the curriculum, ensuring that it is relevant, is a pre-cursor to opening an IBC. Globalisation has confirmed the importance of UK education around the world, but there is another phenomenon I need to consider, namely, 'Glocalism'.

Choudaha in 2013 introduced the concept of 'glocals': 'I call this segment 'glocals' – people who have global aspirations, but need to stay local.' This categorisation describes the students at the case study IBC and this must be considered since students would choose to study at a local institution if they had no global aspirations. By choosing a UK HEI in an overseas location the students demonstrate a desire for an international education.

Choudaha (2013) adds to the concept of 'glocal' in the diagram below:

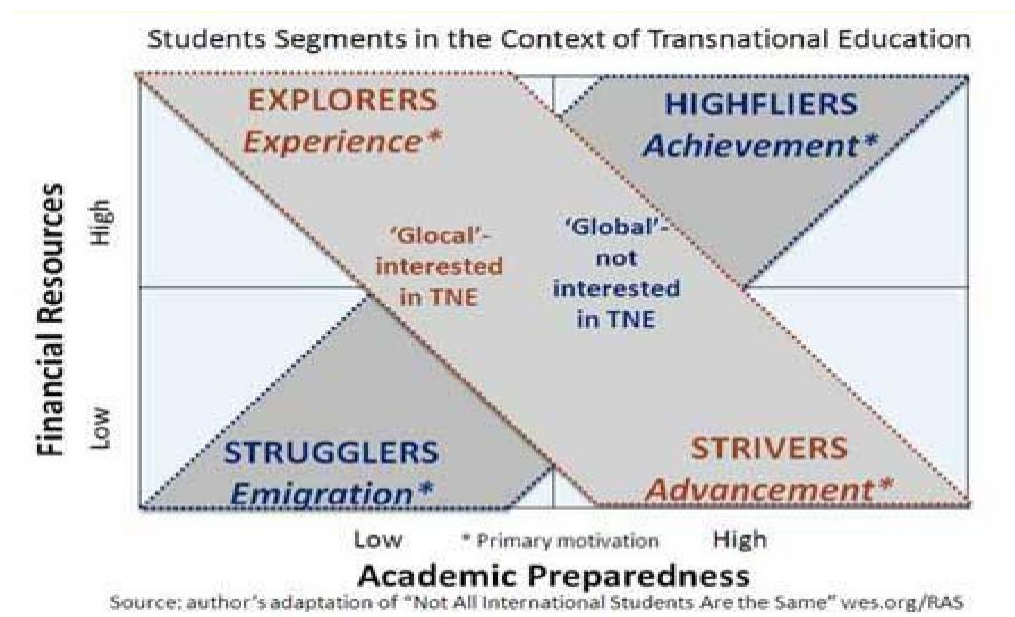


Figure 4 Glocal Student Profile ( Choudaha,R. 2013).

Whilst this concept provides a different insight on students I do not agree with the labelling above. My previous TNE experience in Hong Kong might suggest that students were in the top right quartile, designated as 'global' and not interested in TNE, yet this was not my experience in a part-time postgraduate law programme. Choudaha states that

*'Winning the glocal students requires a deeper comprehension of their changing needs and identification of the best fit delivery models'.*

(Choudaha 2013 <http://www.international.ac.uk/newsletters/archive-international-focus/international-focus-95/transnational-education-competing-to-win-glocal-students.aspx>.)

The concept of 'glocal', is further investigated in the shared experiences of Caruana and Montgomery (2015), showing the motivation of students choosing to study in their own country rather than travel to the UK. It is key to ensure that their studies are relevant. A lesson I have learned through my practice is the importance of internationalising the material but also of localising it to ensure it has a context and relevance to students. According to a study by Yang (2006), students often find course content insufficiently adaptive to their local experience and background and therefore it fails to give real life guidance. Yang further states:

*'The first issue is curriculum adaptability. Both the local culture and globalization play an important role in transnational higher education programs in Hong Kong. Students are most concerned about course contents and their reflection of social and industry needs (the local)'.*  
(2006:48)

This mirrors my experience of working in Hong Kong for 10 years. Students required the international perspective but the local context was equally important. As such, case studies were written using local examples.

Additionally, it is important to consider the distinction between the students studying at an IBC, and international students who choose to study in the UK. The IBC students are not immersed in British culture whilst they study. Consequently, it is necessary to provide additional support in relation to study skills and English

language. This can be illustrated by the QAA 2013 (2012:14) report reviewing TNE in China. The work of Wilkins and Huisman (2011a) identifies 'push and pull' factors

which influence students to study; at an IBC these include the importance of being taught in English and improving their English.

## 2.7 Managing an IBC

A number of management issues have been raised in the current literature which can be summarised below as lessons learnt from the existing literature prior to setting up the IBC. I use these as a framework to guide me through my research. In my thesis I will show the timeframe of what I put in place to ensure that the risks identified below did not cause an issue at our IBC. I will then add to the list the lessons learned through my reflective practice. Additionally, I will then apply Chapter B10 requirements in relation to quality enhancement, thereby turning a potential negative into a positive.

| Issue – Lessons learned from existing literature   |  |
|--|--|
| Faculty/ staff recruitment and retention<br>Altbach (2010)   | Discusses the reluctance of key staff to travel and work overseas.   |
| Maintaining academic standards<br>Wilkins & Huisman (2011)   | Identified ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors motivating student choice to study at an IBC. The reputation of the country for high quality education. |
| Fostering and maintaining relationship with home institution<br>Smith (2009)                                       | Asks the question ‘Is it collaboration or control?’ This should be considered when building the relationship                                 |
| Preparing faculty and staff for transition to new culture<br>Dunn & Wallace (2006)<br>Smith (2009)<br>Gopal (2011) | Important that staff are aware of the situation they are going to enter. Cultural awareness is required. [Gribble & Zuguras, 2003]           |
| Developing and supporting teaching strategies<br>Gopal (2011)  | Ensure staff have time to prepare for their teaching, professional development should be available.  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Providing academic support to students<br>Rostron (2009) | Need to consider pedagogical issues facing students who are not used to study patterns and methods used by overseas providers.<br>May also be language issues. |
|--|--|

Table 2 Lessons learned from existing literature

In operating an IBC it appears that risk is an important focus.

Reflecting not just on the literature relating to IBCs but also that relating to quality, reputational risk is relevant not just in relation to the case study HEI but also to all UK HEIs. According to a report by the UK HE International Unit '*Many institutions regard reputational risk as the most significant one in an international Collaboration*' (2013:54). This may be one of the reasons that there has been a shift to a risk-based approach within TNE from the QAA.

The Times Higher Education Supplement (2014) Gove confirms that the QAA warned that students were being misled by some UK HEI Branch Campuses. In its first report on TNE offered by UK universities in the United Arab Emirates, the Quality Assurance Agency says that only two of the 11 institutions listed as UK Branch Campuses would meet the definition of a 'campus'.

This is an important lesson for ensuring that my case study IBC does qualify under the definition of 'campus' and that students do not feel 'misled' (British Council 2014). It prompts an important aspect of my research in managing expectations of students and other key stakeholders, and further integrating the research based on the first QAA report post the introduction of Chapter B10, which was in the Middle East.



## 2.7 Relevance of quality and TNE

A key strand in my research will be the importance of quality within an IBC. The motivation for this is as previously outlined – the introduction by the UK QAA of a quality framework, Chapter B10 which was introduced just after the case study IBC was opened. When reviewing the existing literature pre-2012 when the IBC opened, much had been written about the importance of quality in TNE and therefore in IBCs. However, nothing had been written directly about the UK QAA Chapter B10 other than by the QAA which provides the theoretical framework.

Reading the 2002 OBHE report by Garrett and the 2006 UNESCO report by Knight which discussed how education moves across borders and the issue of quality assurance provided an initial link which I have used to help with the development of new TNE initiatives. These reports showed the importance of maximising benefits and minimising risks. They followed on from the 2002 OBHE report by the same author, Knight, which outlined the General Agreement on Trades in Services [GATS] impact on education, looking at the ‘liberalization’ of education. Following on from this, the 2005 UNESCO report looked at providing guidelines for quality provision in cross border HE, based on the 2003 resolution to develop practices and principles to guide cross-border provision of HE. UNESCO and other international agencies, such as OECD, proposed competencies, provision of tools and sharing of best practice. This report, which considered national capacity for quality assurance and accreditation, also identified key stakeholders in a bid to encourage international cooperation and enhance understanding of the importance of quality provision in cross border HE provision. The starting point for this was to seek to encourage

national frameworks for quality assurance and request codes of practice in provision of TNE.

This may have been one of the prompts for the unification of the British quality framework in 2012, including the QAA's Chapter B10, wherein much was taken from the previous Scottish system of quality with its emphasis on quality enhancement.

### **2.7.1 Concept of quality and relevance to higher education**

Generally, when considering quality we think of consumer items such as cars and televisions. External benchmarks are set as to what we can expect in terms of quality of these goods. When I buy a car I know the specification; I know what to expect and if it does not meet that expectation I can take people to court to gain redress. One may ask, how does this fit in with education? Do people know what to expect? Are there external benchmarks? Is there redress if specification is not met? As a practitioner, this has led me to identify one of the key areas of importance in my research, namely how to manage expectations, especially when most stakeholders do not know what to expect from a UK HEI qualification. Much has been written relating to the development of quality in education and this is summarised briefly below.

### **2.7.2 Quality definitions**

When looking at what is meant by 'quality' within an educational setting, I was cautious having identified a lack of consistency with definitions relating to TNE. I therefore sought to track the evolving nature of the definitions relating to quality.

| Author            | Definition  |
|-------------------|---|
| Neave (1988)      | Quality is 'elusive'  |
| Gibson (1986)     | 'Quality is notoriously elusive of prescription, and no easier even to describe and discuss that deliver in practice' |
| Becher (1989)     | Quality was a 'creature of political fashion'   |
| Scott (1994)      | 'No authoritative definition of quality in higher education is possible'  |
| McConville (1999) | 'there is no definition.....of quality....you know it when you find it.'  |
| Green (1994)      | 'in the last resort, quality is a philosophical concept'  |
| Chapter B10       | 'assuring and enhancing academic quality' – enhancing student experience  |
| Harvey 2004-2016  | Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement are 2 distinct Activities   |
| Williams 2016     | Considers the relationship of Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement.  |
| Knight & Liu 2017 | Lack of research in relation to quality in HEI's  |

Table 3 Definitions of Quality

It was interesting to note that Chapter B10 provided a definition which supports the view that, when looking at quality, it is necessary to consider 2 aspects, namely assurance, which relates to conforming with regulatory requirements and enhancement which should improve the student experience. This alerted me to the need to consider these 2 aspects.

Quality assurance is the process which tracks processes and procedures to illustrate that the appropriate standards are being met. Quality assurance used to be seen by academics as negative because they previously had little interaction with quality processes and saw them as administrative or managerial processes (2000) Newton. Newton described quality in academia as 'Impression Management' (2000:156), it is important that quality is seen as more than merely an 'impression' there must be tangible outputs. According to Williams (2016:99)

*'..quality assurance processes continue to be seen as a burdensome extra and one that is responded to through ritualised compliance (Harvey & Williams,2010; Anderson,2006; Barrow, 1999). In this view, quality assurance fails to be part of the everyday activity of academics because they perceive no real link between the quality of their academic work (teaching and research) and the performance embodied in quality assurance processes (Harvey & Williams,2010)*

Anderson (2006) titles their work 'Assuring quality/resisting quality assurance:

*academics' responses to 'quality' in some Australian universities'* which illustrates that this view is not restricted to the UK jurisdiction.

Quality enhancement relates to improvement and considers the need to raise standards, as discussed in the Analytical Quality Glossary Harvey (2004).

The shift to quality enhancement, which was as a result of the 2012 Quality Code, can engage the academic and provide an opportunity to gain some positive feedback, rather than negative. Newton (2002) talks about academics 'coping with' quality, I believe that has evolved with the focus on improvement. To facilitate this it was intended that the course evaluation feedback form will have two sections added namely, 'what went well', and 'even better if', providing a mechanism to collect quality enhancement opportunities. Assurance is seen as an administrative role ensuring that quality processes are robust and that standards are appropriate and compliant. Enhancement relates to continuous and systematic improvement, rather than merely standing still. The ideological perspective of quality assurance is considered at point 2.7.4 which follows on from this discussion.

According to the report by the OBHE, Lawton et al. (2013: 51) there is increasing acceptance that higher education is a commodity. They ask 'What will higher education look like in 2013?' According to Knight, (2002:18) we should look to the General Agreement on Trade in Services [GATS] and the Trade Related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights [TRIPS] to see how higher education should be viewed this way. This provides an external benchmark, which is the start of managing expectations.

When we look at defining quality generically much has been written but among the most quoted is Pirsig, (1974:184)

*"Quality...you know what it is, yet you don't know what it is. But that's self-*

*contradictory. But some things are better than others, that is they have more quality, but when you try to say what quality is, apart from the things that have it, it all goes poof!...Obviously some things are better than others...but what's the "betterness"?...What the hell is Quality? What is it?"*

Nevertheless, quality is an important external benchmark which should provide confidence in a UK qualification.

### **2.7.3 The importance of quality**

Issues to be considered as part of the quality assurance process relate to compliance with not only the UK standards set out in Chapter B10 by QAA but also those of other key stakeholders such as the equivalent body in the host country, the Tertiary Education Commission [TEC] and the PRSB which, for the law programmes, was the Joint Academic Stage Board [JASB]. According to Altbach and Knight (2007), there is a need to review the policy and regulation environments, asking

*'Can existing national-level accreditation and quality assurance systems address education mobility across countries, cultures and jurisdictions? Can countries establish and monitor quality systems for incoming and outgoing educational programs, given the diversity and delivery methods? Should regional or international frameworks complement and augment national quality-accreditation systems? Is it advisable and feasible to develop mutual recognition systems between and among countries? Would an international code of good practice help to ensure quality?' (2007:302)*

These are good questions and no real answer has been provided. Each country has its own set of regulations which have been designed to benchmark quality provision for its own programmes. Most systems do not try to link to incoming programmes from international providers. This lesson is an important one in ensuring that

appropriate stakeholders are engaged with the process to ensure compliancy. Otherwise, the risk is that the value of the qualification will be negated which will result in high reputational risk. An example of this can be found in the 2011 closure of the University of Wales as an entity, where the Welsh Government had to make a statement referencing the QAA reports confirming serious weaknesses in the management of its collaborative arrangements. The McCormick Review confirmed that good governance was required at national and institutional level to maintain the reputation of higher education in Wales as a whole, which was at stake. This resulted in the closure of the University of Wales in October 2011. But, if there was a 'one size fits all' international system it could impact on the current differential benefits to certain countries of having what is perceived to be a strong quality framework.

An international body with 8 members was set up in 1991. As of 2018 it has over 250 members. The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education [INQAAHE] is the global network of quality assurance agencies in higher education. It exists to:

- Enable quality assurance agencies to share information and experiences;
- Lead the theoretical and practical foundations of the profession;
- Develop and promote standards of professional practice in QA;
- Encourage and assist continuous improvement in member agencies, including professional development and capacity-building for the benefit of HE institutions, their students and their societies.

INQAAHE is an attempt at a consistent approach to quality in HEIs as globalisation takes place and more areas of the world open their boundaries to education.

Reputation is key to the success of UK TNE. According to a 2014 British Council

report on world reputational rankings, the UK is slipping down rankings and concern is being raised as the USA has 8 out of the top 10 HEIs.

*'In general, rankings based on quality tend to follow the trend of those universities which score high on reputation, but sometimes there are differences. Reputations are built over many years, sometimes decades; and they can be ruined overnight.'* (British Council 2014 Begum,H. 10<sup>th</sup> March 2014)

The UK QAA is aware of this and a consultation has taken place with a report published in May 2014 asking *'What is needed to strengthen the quality assurance of TNE?'* The presumption at the outset was that some strengthening of the present arrangements would be necessary and 69% of those consulted agreed [QAA 2014]. This perhaps is not a ringing endorsement for the recently (as per the opening of the case study IBC) introduced Chapter B10 Indicators and the conclusion of the report was that the sector would benefit from QAA providing more detailed guidance, with case studies used to illustrate good practice. I trust that this study will add to this.

Verbik and Jokivirta (2005a, 2005b) classify the approaches of some 50 countries to quality assurance. They identify six different categories of regulatory framework:

1. **No regulations** – no requirement for special permission (Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Laos, Malta, Mexico, Nigeria, Panama, Portugal, Russia, Serbia, Sri Lanka)
2. **Liberal** – minimal conditions (Argentina, Bahrain, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Romania, Slovenia, UK)
3. **Moderately liberal** – active licensing or accrediting transnational providers (Australia, Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Hong Kong, Hungary, Israel, Jamaica, Kuwait, Pakistan, Singapore, Vietnam)
4. **Very restrictive** – onerous requirements (Bulgaria, Cyprus, South Africa, UAE)
5. **Non-recognition** (Greece, francophone Belgium)
6. **Transitional** – either 'moving from liberal to more restrictive' (India, Malaysia) or 'moving from restrictive to more liberal' (Japan, South Korea).

This reflected the position before the opening of the case study IBC, although the host jurisdiction was not identified in this study.

Verbik and Jokivirta's classification is very useful for establishing patterns of regulation and perhaps is a precursor to greater regulation in the UK, with the implementation of the Quality Code in 2014 moving away from the 'liberal little conditions' to a more proactive approach. As was confirmed in the 2013 consultation prior to its introduction, the outcomes identified included:

*'Visibility of UK regulation: overseas countries may doubt the rigour of quality assurance by QAA because it is not seen to devote enough systematic attention to looking at TNE. The implication is that QAA needs a level of profile and visibility overseas to instil confidence in both the quality assurance system and UK TNE provision.'* (QAA, 2013:6)

In February 2010 a discussion paper was released, there were 4 round table events and liaison with sector groups. A final report was published in August 2010. These concluded that the 2001 framework had worked well but there was now room for improvement and a clearer distinction between 'standards' and 'quality' was required as well as greater clarity about the role of QAA review processes Campbell (2011). This led to the UK Quality Code 2011 which set out the concept of 'Expectations' i.e. things which HE providers expect of each other and which the general public can expect of all HE providers, and 'Indicators' to show how expectations may be met Campbell (2011). It is interesting to note that the main source of information in this area comes directly from QAA which has delivered a number of presentations, including Holt (2014); McLaughlin (2013); Burton (2014). There is also some guidance provided by the Council of Validating Universities [CVU] which has published a handbook aimed at providing good practice guidelines as well as a number of conferences with presentations from Haddleton & Butler (2013) and Raben (2013).

Pyvis (2011) provides a useful insight into the importance of contextualising the



content of programmes to improve quality, an element which has been integrated in this case study example. Al-Hassnawi (2011) provides an interesting comparison of quality issues in the UK and Oman which is helpful in relation to identifying the different approach in different jurisdictions. This theme is followed by Shah et al. (2011) providing an insight into the Australian approach to quality management.

The quality standards for cross border education have evolved from the UNESCO/OECD 2005 guidelines to the QAA 2012 regulations. It is necessary to look at the frameworks that are evolving and developing and also the impact of QAA regulations on IBCs.

One of the motivations for introducing the Quality Framework was to have a common UK Framework across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Prior to 2013 each jurisdiction had its own regulatory framework. The QAA states 'All UK higher education, irrespective of how it is funded, should be underpinned by the same quality assurance framework' McClaran [Chief Executive of QAA] (2013) and confirmed that the Higher Education Review (2013–14) which was a precursor to the Quality Framework was a 'more risk-based approach to quality assurance'. This is an area I addressed in my research.

QAA Chapter 10, Management of Collaborative Arrangements, includes a new definition of '*collaborative arrangements*' and provides indicators of sound practice. The strategy for quality assurance and governance and the challenge of internationalised curriculum would form the basis of the proposed operating systems to promote compliance with the 2012 QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education. This linked back to the need to ensure the case study IBCs programmes are relevant to the students in our branch campus by making curriculum design and content both internationalised and also localised.

The growth of internationalisation and globalisation has encouraged QAA to introduce new guidelines in relation to collaborative provision, which includes Branch Campuses. The new Chapter B10, Management of Collaborative Provision, puts a focus on risk management and the importance of a strategic approach to managing collaborative provision. Major risks have been identified in the University of Wales' termination of all of its collaborative links, due to an investigation QAA carried out in 2011 which found problems at a college in Singapore.

In June 2011, QAA published three reports about the University of Wales. These raised significant concerns about the University's management of its collaborative provision. They considered that the shortcomings identified were serious and needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency. In June 2011, the University of Wales announced that it was to cease all external validation activity and would only award degrees it had designed and fully controlled. This followed on from the McCormick Report, undertaken as a result of limited confidence in University of Wales collaborative provision.

The QAA introduced a Code of Practice in December 2012 and set out Indicators relating to managing higher education provision with others. This code is known as Chapter B10 [QAA 2012]. The focus of this code is to assure and enhance academic quality and impacts on the delivery, design and enhancement of all TNE programmes.

The revised Chapter B10 of the UK Quality Code was published on 21 December 2012, and was used by the QAA in its reviews of HEIs from January 2014 onwards.

The greatest risk is reputational risk, which impacts across the HEI sector when we deliver programmes internationally. We must remember that not only are we

representing our own university we are also representing all UK HEIs. Altbach and Knight summarise this well (2007:302)

*'In balancing quality issues with the financial investment and return, higher education providers must consider the intellectual property ownership, choice of partners, division of responsibilities, academic and business risk assessments and internal and external approval processes'.*

I used this structure to consider both quality assurance and also quality enhancement within the setting of a live case study IBC.

The case study IBC was designed and opened prior to these indicators being introduced. Therefore, an audit of all current provision was suggested to ensure compliance with the code of practice indicators. In relation to the case study IBC this forms part of the findings chapter, which also refers to an audit tool, used to ensure initial compliance.

#### **2.7.4 Why is quality important in an educational setting?**

There has been “a reluctance in higher education as a discipline to critique the ideology of quality evaluation”(Harvey and Newton, 2004:156), hence the need to consider it within this study. Quality assurance agencies both in the UK and in the jurisdiction of the IBC, often have formal or actual power to confer or deny the authority that is necessary for an academic programme to be offered or to be successful, and in the course of exercising that power they can practically dictate how the programme is to be designed. The decisions of quality assurance agencies may have a great influence on the allocation of resources among institutions and programmes, as in the example of the Research Assessment Exercise in the United Kingdom. Quality has also been developed in the Teaching Excellence Framework [TEF] which had the sub-heading of ‘Fulfilling our Potential’ which involves students more in the quality process and also focused on ‘Lessons Learned’ and has

amended the title to 'Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework' [TEF] in October 2017. This reinforces the relevance of using student outcomes as an appropriate matrix in my findings to triangulate the motivation for assessing the appropriateness of the quality enhancement opportunities.

When considering the philosophical or ideological perspective of quality it is important to consider the need for externality and governance to set and maintain the countries standards. Quality assurance relates to maintaining standards, both internally and externally, Williams (2016:97), but could also relate to 'accountability' Collini (2012), this may add to the negativity associated with quality assurance since accountability could amount to 'blame'. Gosling and D'Andrea (2001) highlighted concerns that quality assurance can have a tendency to subvert trust and respect for academics' expertise. They found that academics wanted to replace the 'name and shame' approach to a 'name and claim' approach to quality development/enhancement (2001:19). Continuous monitoring should assist with this process and the capturing of data as 'what went well, even better if...' certainly refocuses the 'name and shame' approach.

The reputational risk of all of the countries HEI's can be tarnished by one example of poor quality assurance. Higher education continues to be relevant to both developed and developing nations to support sustainable growth and development.

The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is used to assure the standards and quality of UK higher education, and is kept up to date by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). It is used by UK higher education providers to ensure they are achieving the outcomes expected of them. It presents a series of reference points to help providers offer their students a high-quality experience.

A key part of QAA's role is to review and report on how providers of higher education, such as universities and colleges, maintain their academic standards and quality. All HEIs

were subject to regular audits by the QAA and are published on the QAA website.

The overall aim of Higher Education Review is to inform students and the wider public whether a provider meets the expectations of the higher education sector for:

- the setting and/or maintenance of academic standards
- the provision of learning opportunities
- the provision of information
- the enhancement of the quality of students' learning opportunities

**Other external reference points include:**

- The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- Subject Benchmark Statements for undergraduate and masters degrees, and
- Higher education credit framework for England: guidance on academic credit arrangements

By creating external governance it could be said that Quality Assurance is a condition that leads to the achievement of transparency. It is important that the HEI is able to illustrate compliance relating to quality assurance as such all UK HEI's should achieve the same standards, thus providing confidence that UK higher education is still relevant and appealing to international students. In today's competitive market place what allows one UK HEI to stand out from other UK HEI's is the ability to identify and provide quality enhancement opportunities, therefore a framework which provides a mechanism to capture quality enhancement opportunities should provide the distinguishing factors between HEI's. The introduction of a Lessons Learned Log ensures quality assurance, by providing a clear transparent audit trail through the introduction of continuous monitoring. Additionally, by introducing a 'What went well, even better if...' approach to capturing student feedback provides the framework to identify quality enhancement opportunities, this provides an individual HEI to develop their own philosophy to quality and their own quality culture.

The distinction between assurance and enhancement has further supported the alignment and distinction of roles with assurance relating to processes and procedures whereas according to Amaral (2007) academic staff are more interested in quality improvement or enhancement. Although quality assurance and quality assurance are distinct activities it could be seen that quality assurance is a 'top down process' with quality enhancement being a 'bottom up,

negotiated process, based on qualitative judgement and engagement with academics' Williams (2016:99). Both processes need to be mindful of the shift to the risk based approach which ensures decisions made are considered in relation to minimising the exposure to risk both internally and externally.

## 2.8 Risk-Based Approach

A risk-based approach has been introduced which should be followed in relation to:

*'commissioning, developing and managing arrangements for delivering leaning opportunities'.* [QAA 2012:6]

*'The risk based approach should develop and approve a range of different practices and procedure that are tailored and proportionate to the risks of the collaboration they are planning.'* [QAA 2012:7]

When looking at the relationship between risk and higher education it is helpful to look at key writers such as Newton (2002); Haddleton & Butler (2013); and Raban (2011, 2013), as well as the HEFCE & HEBRG [Higher Education Better Regulation Group] risk management in HE good practice guidelines (2005).

Risk is not necessarily a term used by academics in relation to the delivery of a programme. 'Risk' and 'quality' are terms that appear to be relevant to administrative and management roles (Laughton, 2003). Additionally, when looking to develop a new relationship with an international partner, a focus on risk appears to be a negative response. It is important to consider risk throughout the cycle of delivery, namely commissioning, developing and managing (Haddleton and Butler, 2013).

Exposure to risk is important. If we are cocooned and never exposed to risk, when it does come we are less likely to know how to cope with it. The Government White Paper Higher Education: Students at the Heart of the System (2011) supported a

‘genuinely risk-based’ approach, apparently following the Australian model which has a high international reputation, as illustrated in the 2014 British Council Report:

|                | Overall score | Openness  | Quality assurance and recognition | Access and sustainability |
|----------------|---------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Australia      | Very high     | Very high | Very high                         | High                      |
| Botswana       | Low           | High      | Low                               | Low                       |
| Brazil         | Low           | High      | Very low                          | High                      |
| Chile          | Low           | Low       | Very low                          | High                      |
| China          | High          | Very high | Low                               | Very high                 |
| Colombia       | Low           | Low       | Very low                          | Very high                 |
| Egypt          | Low           | Low       | Low                               | High                      |
| Ethiopia       | Very low      | Low       | Very low                          | Very low                  |
| Germany        | Very high     | Very high | Very high                         | Very high                 |
| Ghana          | Low           | Low       | Low                               | Low                       |
| India          | High          | High      | Low                               | High                      |
| Indonesia      | High          | High      | Low                               | Very high                 |
| Kazakhstan     | High          | Low       | Low                               | High                      |
| Kenya          | Low           | High      | Low                               | Low                       |
| Malaysia       | Very high     | Very high | Very high                         | Very high                 |
| Mexico         | Low           | Very low  | Very low                          | High                      |
| Nigeria        | Low           | Low       | Very low                          | Low                       |
| Pakistan       | High          | High      | Low                               | High                      |
| Philippines    | High          | High      | High                              | Low                       |
| Russia         | High          | High      | Low                               | High                      |
| South Africa   | Low           | High      | High                              | Low                       |
| Thailand       | High          | High      | Low                               | Very high                 |
| Turkey         | High          | High      | Low                               | Very high                 |
| United Kingdom | Very high     | Very high | Very high                         | High                      |
| United States  | High          | High      | Low                               | High                      |
| Vietnam        | High          | High      | High                              | High                      |

Table 4 Overview of the National Policies Framework and countries' scores (rating indicates the level of government support provided) British Council Report (Ilieva and Peak 2014:7)

The report's findings illustrate that the UK is perceived to have a 'Very High' quality assurance recognition with the USA having a 'Low' rating which is interesting and may demonstrate a shift in key players in relation to IBCs. This is further supported by an additional measure in the same report which considers:

‘the regulatory environment and the degree to which it supports countries' IHE strategies.

It considers the following categories:

- i. Quality assurance of international students.
- ii. Quality assurance of programme and provider mobility.

### iii. Recognition of international qualifications.’ [Ilieva and Peake 2014:10]

This again shows that the UK and Australia are rated ‘Very High’ whereas the USA is ‘Low’.

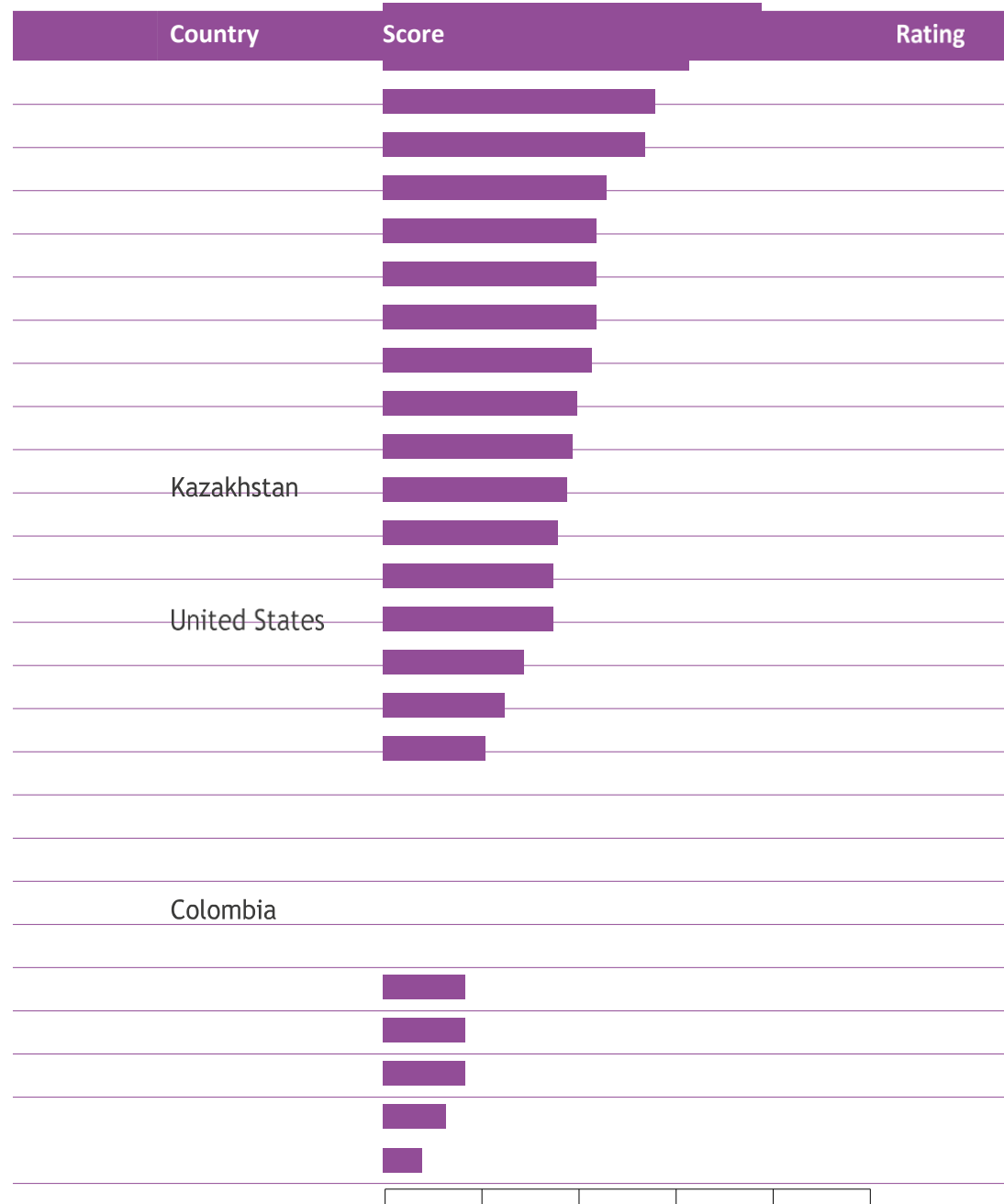


Table 5 Quality assurance and degree recognition policies (rating indicates the level of government support provided) British Council Report (Ilieva and Peak 2014:10)

## 2.8.1 Defining risk

Since the risk-based approach is new to UK HEIs and their relationship with collaborative provision, it is important to know what is meant by risk. A definition



widely used is given by the Australia/ New Zealand Standard for Risk Management (2004) which states that 'Risk is the possibility of something happening that impacts on your objectives' (AZ/NZ 2:2004) which is similar to the view of HEFCE (2001:5) which defines it as:

*'The threat of possibility that an action or event will adversely or beneficially affect an organisation's ability to achieve its objectives.'*

It is interesting to note that risk is not always a negative. It can also 'beneficially affect' an organisation. Risk tends to equate to reward, the more risks taken the greater the potential rewards. However, what is considered acceptable risk depends on the risk appetite of an organisation. The risk appetite, or the amount of risk an organisation is willing to take can be seen as part of the external governance framework, which is the case with UK HEIs. Again, when one considers the reputational risk relating to TNE, risk appetite should be low so that other UK HEIs are not tarnished.

Having shifted to a risk-based approach means that it is necessary not only to identify risks but then to manage them. A risk therefore shifts the focus from a body in doing what it is meant to do. For example: being able to deliver a class to a student due to a member of staff being off sick, if there is no plan B, resources are taken in informing students and having to re-arrange the class rather than delivering the class or referring students to on line material to supplement the missed class.

Considering risk outcomes was part of the consultation process prior to the introduction of the Quality Framework: 'objectives centre on providing public assurance, protecting the interests of students, and securing the reputation of UK higher education' QAA (2013:5)

According to QAA's statement of the purpose of the UK Quality Code:

*'The Quality Code is intended to assist higher education providers and QAA in:*  
*Safeguarding academic standards*  
*Assuring the academic quality of learning opportunities*  
*Promoting continuous and systematic improvements (enhancement)*  
*Ensuring that information about programmes is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. (QAA, 2015:2)*

This confirms that the risks relate to quality assurance and quality enhancement, which is in the definition above – 'promoting continuous and systematic improvements'. This useful insight has been helpful when operationalising the above theory into practice.

### **2.8.2 Risk and the importance of quality and UK HEI**

The reputation of UK education is still high and it is important to maintain this. Adam (2001:42) includes in his list of factors determining the demand for TNE the 'brand name of the provider and product' and the 'reputation, quality and perceptions of the programme'.

Prior to the introduction of the Quality Code a period of consultation took place and, during this consultation period, consideration was given to:

*'Reputational damage: poor standards and/or quality of one provider can reflect adversely on other UK providers (even if there is no evidence to suggest that the other providers are of poor quality). (QAA, December 2013:6)*

This reinforces the view of all UK HEIs being at risk if one institution fails. Further the consultation confirmed that:

*'objectives centre on providing public assurance, protecting the interests of students, and securing the reputation of UK higher education'. QAA (2013:5)*

Managing the expectations of all stakeholders is an important element and has been discussed throughout my study. Anthony McClaran (2013), Chief Executive of the QAA, said that the report was timely as 'UK TNE is set to increase'. He said the reports on TNE were 'intended to inform students, support institutions and maintain the good reputation of UK higher education worldwide'.

Before setting up an overseas campus there are a number of important considerations. Some guidance has been provided at an OBHE conference by Gill (2012) in The challenges of IBC Management. As previously mentioned, this has been reviewed as part of my findings but the areas identified by Gill seem to focus on quality assurance rather than enhancement.

Gill's work can provide a useful checklist for any other HEI considering entering this new sector, although I would add to the list and also provide some examples. Gill provided an insight into the issues which should be considered from a regulatory perspective. These appear to be generic and not jurisdiction specific. Consequently, as part of a risk assessment it would be helpful to use Gill's as a framework for identifying risks and being able to mitigate them.

|   |
|---|
| Lessons learned from Gill (2012) relating to International Branch Campus management |
| Regulations regarding IBCs  |
| Qualifications recognised locally and internationally                               |
| Programme approvals, procedures and timescales                                      |
| Limitations not immediately obvious (age restrictions)                              |
| Student/ employment visa category   |
| Choice of name (what does it mean locally?)   |
| Company law, taxes and repatriation of funds  |

Table 6 Summary lessons learned from Gill (2012)

When helping to create a new branch campus it is difficult to define quality but the research from Wilkins and Huisman (2011) shows that quality is as important as price when students choose their Branch Campus. As Pirsig says above, we know

what it is; we can recognise it; we know when something is good; but it is hard to define, or perhaps more importantly, measure. It is also important to be able to identify poor quality and react even quicker to it.

## 2.9 Closing an IBC

After a decision had been made to close the IBC in the host country in June 2015, as with the position when opening an IBC, I sought to learn lessons from those who had already had the practical experience of managing a closure. My research journey has spanned 3 years from the decision to open an IBC in 2012 to the 2015 closure.

Enderlein (2010) provided a useful insight in his presentation '*When IBCs Close: Lessons Learned*'. This used a case study example basis, again reinforcing the value of research with my own case study example. This work described 4 distinct examples of case study universities which had closed their IBCs and looked at 'the consequences and the aftermath' (2010:26). Whilst this work was interesting it did not focus on my quest of 'what to do' when closing an IBC. Rather it reflected on what had caused the closure. However, the 'aftermath' part of his discussion did provide me with some lessons learned from my community of practice in identifying the choices made available to students once the IBC closed.

| IBC  | Duration of IBC                   | Options available to students when closure announced   |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| George Mason University which had an IBC in Ras Al Khaimah (UAE) | Opened in 2005 and closed in 2009 | The options available to students were to:<br>1. transfer to the home institution or<br>2. continue through distance education |
| University of Southern Queensland which had                      | Opened in 2004 and closed in 2005 | The options available to students were to:   |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| an IBC in Dubai                                |  | 1. transfer to the home institution (63 out of 100 did this) or<br>2. continue through distance education         |
| La Verne University which had an IBC in Athens | Opened in 1975 and closed in 2004                              | The only offer to students was to transfer to other schools – officials were sent out to assist with this process |
| University of Connecticut IBC in Dubai         | December 2006 – May 2007 – legally existed but did not operate | IBC failed to open  |

Table 7 Examples of IBCs closing (Enderlein 2010)

The lessons learned and concluded by Enderlein focused on the reasons for failure rather than the options available and the operational issue of 'how to' manage the operation of closing an IBC. This work did provide some potential options which could assist in fulfilling Chapter B10 and are considered later in this work.

Other than Enderlein's work, the review of literature in relation to closures of IBCs focused on two key areas, namely data and reasons for failure.

### 2.9.1 Data on IBC closures

The literature on IBCs in relation to closing tends to be in the form of data providing information about which IBCs had closed. Lawton and Katsomitros (2012), in the OBHE report, provided data showing which IBCs closed between 2009 and 2012. The report shows 18 closed (2012:88) with the majority closing within 5 years of opening and one closing in the same year it opened [French Fashion University to Melbourne, 2009]. This research was updated in 2016 with Garrett, et al, showing the closures between 2011 and 2016 (2016:123) which is somewhat confusing, with a crossover of data on 3 closures being covered in both data sets. Perhaps more disappointing is the fact that my case study university does not appear in the list of

closures though it was formally announced in the UK press in December 2015 and the report was published November 2016.

### 2.9.2 Reasons for closure

The 2012 OBHE provided 'reasons' for closure, whereas the updated 2016 work did not. There were two main reasons for the closures of IBCs in the 2012 report, namely poor quality assurance issues, which supported the closure by and disengagement of a number of Australian Universities from 2007 (OBHE 2007), or accreditation removal by an external Professional Regulatory Statutory Body, as with the University of Northern Virginia. The other reason put forward as a reason for closure was low student numbers. This was Wilkins' suggested reason for the closure of the case study university (2016:178). He said 'the...[case study HEI] announced it would close its campus in Host country because four years after opening it still had only 140 students' (Times Higher Education, Morgan 2015:1) but this is inaccurate. The actual number of enrolled students was higher than this and more prospective students had applied prior to the decision to close being made.

The actual reason for closure could not have been anticipated even after the thorough due diligence process and annual reviews. One must be aware that sometimes things happen hence the need for a 'Force Majeure' clause which cover areas which are outside of either parties control. The reason for this closure fell within force majeure which had the legal consequence that neither party was deemed to be in breach of the contractual relationship identified in the Memorandum.

Wilkins further cites 'rushed decisions that under-estimated the risks involved', pointing to a correlation between the key themes in this study, quality and the inter-

relationship with risk.

A more recent example of a closure of an IBC relates to the University of Aberystwyth which announced the closure of its IBC, which opened in 2015, with no further admissions from March 2018. In the first year of operation only 40 students were recruited and in the second year 106. The press stated that the reason for the closure was low student numbers. The University of Aberystwyth, unlike the case study university, invested in building a campus and employing full-time faculty staff in-country. This allows a useful comparator in that the more costly financial model used by Aberystwyth was no more successful than the flying faculty model used by the case study university.

Enderlein (2010) says that 'in many cases the protection of the home institution is more important than the operation of an International Branch Campus', this seems to be case for the University of Aberystwyth (Times Higher Education 7<sup>th</sup> February 2018:1) which states that Aberystwyth lost £1 million on its IBC. Professor Derec Llwyd Morgan, who was the Vice Chancellor of the university from 1994 to 2004, branded the venture 'madness' and said resources would be better off invested in 'high-quality staffing' in the UK [Daily Mail 5<sup>th</sup> Harding December 2017:1], which is also supported by the view from the case study university whose Vice Chancellor 'A' stated:

*'Following a review of its branch campus strategy, the University has taken the decision to focus on its UK campuses and TNE partnerships, rather than operate branch campuses'. (Express & Star, 16<sup>th</sup> December 2015)*

The OBHE 2009 Report (2009:20 ) identifies a number of 'Policy Issues' which should be considered prior to opening an IBC, one of which is:

*'Develop an 'exit strategy' to remove your campus from the partnerships*

*or country if the venture is not successful. Try to include this contingency plan upfront in the contract. This strategy should also address which options you will give to your branch campus students to complete their studies at the home campus or local institutions'. (Becker 2009:20)*

This supports the view put forward by the QAA with the introduction of Chapter B10.

The 'exit strategy' has been discussed further in relation to the case study university, and was part of the initial negotiations providing a brief outline of responsibilities. A far more detailed plan would be needed if exit was necessary.

Whilst researching closing an IBC, I noted that there are currently two main themes in the literature, namely data on closures and reasons for closure. There is nothing relating to 'how to close' post introduction Chapter B10. This is the gap I have identified in the literature and I trust that my research will provide some valuable lessons in this area.

### **2.9.3 The importance of quality when closing an IBC**

There has been a shift to a risk-based approach with the introduction of the QAA Quality Code in 2014 as the definitive reference point for all UK HEIs. It has three parts; Part A sets and maintains academic standards; Part B relates to assuring and enhancing academic quality; and Part C relates to information about higher education provision. Part B is most relevant to IBCs since Part B10 relates to 'Managing Education Provision with Others'.

As confirmed by the then Chief Executive of QAA (Randall, 1998)

*'Delivery of higher education programmes is becoming increasingly diverse and complex, not least through the rapid growth of collaborative arrangements...Complexity adds risk, and risk must be managed'. (per Raban, 2013:7)*

Raban's (2013) view is that introducing the 'risk-based approach' was 'closing the



stable doors' in that it was too late. There had already been a large number of high profile casualties, including the University of Wales. The UK Quality Code Chapter B10 seeks to learn lessons from the previous 'casualties' and confirms the introduction of a risk based approach:

*'It is incumbent on the awarding institutions to assess the risks involved and manage these appropriately.... The range of collaborative opportunities now available means that awarding institutions will need to develop a risk based approach to developing and managing collaborative activity'. (2014:8)*

Chapter B10 QAA, which applies directly to IBCs and the mode of delivery used in this case study example, namely flying faculty, refers to

*'Branch campuses, educational villages and 'flying faculty' arrangements, which include aspects of collaboration (such as provision of resources or employment of local administrative/clerical staff through arrangements with another organisation).'* (2014:7)

[http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/chapter-b10\\_-managing-higher-education-provision-with-others.pdf?sfvrsn=8c02f781\\_8](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/chapter-b10_-managing-higher-education-provision-with-others.pdf?sfvrsn=8c02f781_8)

Detailed guidance is provided on the responsibility to allow students to complete their studies if the IBC closes and this should be useful. A major element in this study has been to gauge the effectiveness of Chapter B10 QAA when closing an IBC.

## 2.10 Summary

On reflection, in reviewing the existing literature in relation to TNE and more specifically IBCs, there is confusion stemming from a lack of consistency in definitions. I have been alerted to the lack of rigour in some data which has served as a reminder that when I am structuring my research I must learn from this and make my findings as robust as possible.

I used the lessons I have learned from the existing literature as a framework for

this study and I hope to be able to add to this knowledge bank from my current exposure to practice.

The introduction of the QAA Quality Framework is a major influence in my study due to both its timing, which coincided with the opening of the case study IBC in 2012, and the shift to a risk-based approach and the consequential importance of continuous monitoring. Quality enhancement opportunities formed a key part of this study. I would seek to identify enhancement opportunities through the setting up, operating and subsequent closure of the IBC.

I have identified a gap in the current literature which relates to how to close an IBC based upon the QAA Quality Framework. This case study IBC was one of the first to close subsequent to the introduction of Chapter B10. This study should add to understanding and provide an insight from a current practitioner. After reviewing the existing literature I have been able to identify my research questions, based on areas of key importance and existing gaps in knowledge.

## **2.11 Research Questions**

1. What lessons may be learned from opening, managing and closing an IBC?
2. How does the shift to continuous monitoring assist in identifying quality enhancement opportunities?

## Chapter 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

Selecting which methodology and methods to use for this study was challenging from a number of perspectives. As a relatively new researcher, I immersed myself in number of texts, the starting point being Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) and Guba & Lincoln (1994). These texts introduced me to a variety of options available at least as a start to the investigative part of my study. This chapter tracks my increased awareness of the importance and relevance of the methodology and methods which evolved as circumstances changed highlighting the need for a pragmatic approach to study.

I was aware that my recent and historical ontological experiences, my focussed reading and the subject matter involved, plus my role as a participative practitioner had the potential to affect choices and decisions. The only defence I can offer is that, since I am aware of this possibility, that knowledge and experience will be used to good effect to inform the research and the fact that I am aware of possible influence will help to ensure that there is no bias in choice of research methods and my results and conclusions.

In summary, my paradigm is interpretative. According to Kant I need to understand the position I find myself in, namely managing an IBC which in turn provides an 'erlebnis', or a lived experience, as in the work of Schwandt (1989). Because I have lived through the experience of opening, managing and subsequently closing an IBC, I hope that sharing my experiences will add to the knowledge of my community of practice, so that my practice will allow others to learn too. This follows on from

Wenger (2011) who confirms the importance of learning from others and sharing experiences from practice which has been influenced by the theory I identified in my literature review. The theoretical framework, being interpretivist, identifies reality based on my experiences in practice which I seek to interpret. The methodology I have used to interpret was predominantly be qualitative, using the method of case study – the case study IBC. The case study approach I used is a hybrid, the major influence on it coming from Yin (2014, 2018). However, due to the precise circumstances of my specific case study, in order to mitigate the potential weakness of data collection which I became aware of during my literature review, especially in terms of quantitative data, I added a number of elements from Stake (1995, 2006) which I trust increases the robustness of my data collection. The final element which influenced my research design was my positionality within the research. I found myself at the centre of my research, sharing my experiences as an academic and as a manager. Anderson and Herr (1999) helpfully created an insider practitioner quadrant which I used to identify what knowledge I still needed to gain to facilitate my understanding of the case study I was involved in. Additionally the work of Schon (1987) on being a reflective practitioner and McLintock (2004) on identifying the role of scholar-practitioner also assisted with my positionality within this study.

### **3.2 Positionality**

Once I realised that the factors discussed in the introduction above, plus my paradigm as an interpretivist, could influence the options available, I sought to assess how I position myself vis-à-vis the whole study and the methods of investigation in particular. Prior to becoming an academic I would have found the positivist paradigm the most comfortable choice. As a lawyer I am trained to work

closely in an evidence-based environment where I can then find the answer which suits my client. However, as a practitioner working in an educational setting, I have learned that my ontological position has shifted and that there is no longer one truth; that people can influence the environment in which I am based; and that my epistemological stance is to interpret what is happening. I believe that this will be of some help in this study in looking at the setting of an IBC.

The concept of an IBC is new. It is a venture of which few have had significant experience. Prior to my involvement in international development for an HEI, I had no previous experience of it either. So at least, in this way I can see what is happening from a relatively unfettered stance, with no bias, and yet through my experience of TNE generally, I can interpret the situation. Thus, having determined my situation, I note my theoretical perspective as based in an interpretivist paradigm. Consequently, it would seem that the methodologies available to me are limited and the most appropriate choice is that of action research, since my research is within a specific practical situation in which I work as a practitioner to solve clearly identified problems with the aim of improvement (Burton and Bartlett, 2009). I am carrying out educational research in which I seek to change or improve educational experiences (Burton and Bartlett, 2002). The nature of my research is practical in that it is based upon my practice at the IBC. Hammersley (2002) supports the appropriateness of action research undertaken in such a situation. As such this supports the appropriateness of action research.

Costley and Gibbs (2006) assisted my thinking and my self-mentoring approach in my role of practitioner-researcher and I was reminded of the potential issues of working with people with whom I am familiar and the challenges (as well as the

opportunities) of the insider/outsider researcher role (Schultz and Hatch, 1996). My first option for consideration, that of a systems approach, was supported by Dick (2004). This approach provided the opportunity to use action research effectively from an educational perspective. Gray (2004) reminded me also of the importance of clearly confirming my data gathering method and the importance of validating it. So the decision had to be made with caution and then certainty, to provide best data and solutions to the questions set.

Research within a specific practical situation carried out by practitioners to solve clearly identified problems in order to improve (Burton and Bartlett, 2009) lies under the encompassing umbrella of action research and is therefore a comfortable and effective option for me. This, coupled with the comment made by Burton and Bartlett (2009) that I am carrying out research to seek to change or improve educational experiences, made the choices more palatable. As a practitioner in a work-based setting therefore, according to Anderson and Herr (1999) and with the work-based setting being specifically within a UK HEI with a focus on an IBC, my research in this area is both informed and appropriate.

From the perspective of action research I am seeking to improve my own practice; also my own interpretivist paradigm and my educational perspective naturally favour improving practice for the benefit of others, which fits naturally with the principles laid down by Dodds and Hart (2001) in their guidance for carrying out practitioner research. This was also a significant part of my daily work as an academic with the IBC concerned as part of my remit to improve my understanding of this relatively new educational phenomenon. I needed to find mechanisms to enhance the quality of provision of educational programmes and involvement and also reduce the risks of

activity by the HEI and its IBC. It is also important to share any improved practice with fellow practitioners and other academics working in the same area to initiate and foster a specialised community of practice for this innovative educational interaction. At the preparatory stages, negotiating the partnership between the organisations, and at the due diligence stages, there were a number of lessons which I had already learned and much has been added to this knowledge to date. I have definitely found it an advantage to be a practitioner-researcher and, as Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) note, having this role supports my accumulation of knowledge in this discrete area of TNE. The implications of this allow me to gather data which may not be available to others.

Therefore, in summary, my position is that of a practitioner in a work-based setting, seeking to improve my own practice with a view to improving practice for others (Dodds and Hart, 2007). Reflective thinking provides the search for knowledge beyond my immediate experience, which is what I require in this study.

### **3.3 Research paradigm**

My research paradigm is that of an interpretivist and, as such, I saw my role while managing the IBC as interpreting the events which took place. This study therefore falls within the interpretivist tradition which is a logical progression from my epistemological stance that reality needs to be interpreted. This has allowed me to discover the underlying meaning of the events and activities which took place during my involvement at the IBC. According to Zuber-Sherrit (1996), action research would allow me to find out 'what works', which is exactly what I am hoping to discover.

Specifically, I wish to identify risks involving the IBC and how to ensure that using quality enhancement to improve the student experience produces identifiable benefits.

When looking at the role of researchers and participants, according to Stringer (1999), as a researcher using a type of action research, my role should be that of a facilitator not an expert. According to Gray (2004:383) the researcher should be a 'catalyst' for achieving change by stimulating people to review practices and to accept the need for change. The position I find myself in is therefore not about accepting the need for change; it is more about the capacity to improve if improvement is needed. One of the mechanisms to facilitate this capacity for improvement has been the use of the Chapter B10 quality framework with its emphasis on quality enhancement (QAA, 2014).

The situation of the HEI and the IBC is one which involves a variety of stakeholders, as I identified early on in my research, and it is important to keep a balanced perspective. I cannot take a scientific, positivist approach as I am dealing with people and their views. I need to take an interpretivist view, which is by its very nature subjective. If the research involved societies or groups it would mean a critical approach was needed. As such some of the potential choices for my research design are not appropriate to what I wanted to find out and how I wanted to find that knowledge. By the very nature of the situation, I find myself using a form of qualitative research. This has allowed me to make decisions based on evidence I have collected.



In order to identify my ontological stance, that there is no single truth, I am not looking for 'the only right answer'. I am looking for the most appropriate answer in the circumstances in which I found myself at the IBC. According to Anderson and Arsenault (2005), it is necessary to consider the idea that:

*'How you see the world is largely a function of where you view it from, what you look at, what lens you use to help you see. What tools you use to clarify your image, what you reflect on and how you report your world to others.'* (2005 : 2)

In other words, there is 'baggage' which you bring with you. Without realising that you have views and bias, certain conclusions will be based upon previous experience, not just what you find out. This then leads into the discussion as to whether research should be subjective or objective. Based on my background I prefer to consider research as being objective and this is why I am more comfortable using quantitative rather than qualitative data. However, this is not appropriate to this study due to the nature of data collection and my position as an insider practitioner.

Quantitative data (House, 1980:86) means that observation is factual, while being subjective means that the observation is biased in some way. To my mind, data should be capable of translating into figures or values. I intend to use some quantitative data to support my interpretative qualitative approach, this will be in the form of analysing student performance and providing comparable performance data for the IBC compared to that of the UK HEI. This, I trust, will provide a useful measure and add rigour to the process.

When researching, it is better to use a mixture of these approaches, although some social science researchers, such as Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Schwandt (1989), state that qualitative and quantitative approaches are incompatible. However, others,

Patton (1990) and Reichardt and Cook (1979) believe that the skilled researcher can successfully combine approaches. Such different approaches can provide an insight into understanding different things about the world. However, people tend to stay with the methodology that is most consistent with their 'socialized worldview', according to Glesne and Peshkin (1992). This is what my current research project seeks to do. Kelle (2001) sees the mixture of these approaches as contributing to triangulation of research by assisting the process of cumulative validation or by helping to produce a more complete picture or 'fuller picture' of the 'investigated phenomena' (2001:107).

When reflecting on my ontological position, by using a case study approach I can see clearly and assess what is needed to meet the criteria of being an IBC. The core position is the reflection on how things have changed between the opening of the IBC in 2012 and closing in 2016. The epistemological view is based on my knowledge. My ontology is based on the fact, according to Blaikie (2008:8), that: *'ontological assumptions are concerned with what we believe constitutes social reality'*.

A weakness which I have identified is the inequality of players involved in the research and the discussion of researching 'with' rather than 'on'. I have not found this to be a problem, though, as I have viewed it as a team effort with the stakeholders who 'dip into' and 'out of' the research process. The aim of my research is to learn lessons from the operation of the IBC and to use that experience to generate opportunities to both identify risk and provide quality enhancement. As such there is no conflict between the stakeholders, especially since, as part of this research, systems are in place to gather data from a pro-active stance, ensuring that

any quality enhancement takes place immediately (Heron and Reason, 2001). In addition, research 'with' has transformative potential. According to Oates (2002:30):

*'A transformative inquiry seeks to explore practice within some domain and change it.'*

This supports my research into looking to find enhancements which will hopefully improve both the current and future position of an IBC, especially when I can share my experiences with my community of practice.

Since Lewin (1946), action researchers have believed that the best way to understand a problem is to try to change it. However, I have been somewhat more open-minded and, rather than make an assumption that things need to change, I prefer to wait to see if change is necessary and then act. Since the context of my research is twofold, namely quality assurance and quality enhancement, the motivation for change in relation to quality assurance has come from a regulatory source, namely the QAA Chapter B10 Indicators. These identify 'how' we will be judged from a compliance/assurance context

A type of action research which mirrors my current role is that of participatory action research (PAR). According to McTaggart (1997) its aim is to transform situations or structures and this is illustrated in the comment that:

*'Participatory action researchers become alert to clues about how it may be possible to transform the practices they are producing and reproducing through their current ways of working'. (McTaggart, 1997:279)*

This seems to fit the situation I am in. However, I then came across a problem, namely the comment that:

*'It is also participatory in the sense that people can only do action research "on" themselves, either individually or collectively. It is not research done "on" others'.* (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2007:281)

This was not what I had intended to do with my research so this may not be the research design most appropriate to my circumstances. Although I am a player in the research, it is not about me; it is about key stakeholders of the IBC, most particularly the students. Having said that there seems to be a synergy between participatory action research and action science, according to Whyte (1991).

The intention of the research was to record what has been experienced and achieved to date, between 2012 and 2016, against the principles and understanding of the IBC and where it fits in relation to quality management. According to Healey (2014) there is less of an exposure to risk in an IBC than in other forms of TNE.

A natural option for me with an action research perspective, initially, was to adopt a Soft Systems Methodology. I felt that this was ideal, linked with a case study approach. It is both visual, using rich pictures, and focussed, in that it provides a framework.

The framework for the epistemology of my research is based on my theoretical perspective as an insider interpretative which allows me to consider the ontological stance. I am not looking for a single reality or truth; I am looking to describe the version of truth or reality created by a case study example relating to a specific IBC. Consequently, my epistemological position relates to my role of interpreting the position to discover the underlying meaning of events.

### 3.4 Insider practitioner

Tolley and Bentley (1996), further supported by Herr and Anderson (2005:39) provide some insight into the journey an insider has in learning and outline 4 squares of knowledge (see below), starting in Quadrant II in which I don't know but others do and moving to Quadrant I where both parties know, which is where I hope to finish my research. I have already had some experience of being in Quadrant II when seeking to identify the quality assurance criteria for working in the host country and liaising with its TEC (Tertiary Education Commission). I hope that my research will allow me to monitor my development of learning and, through reflection, arrive at Quadrant I. Since the QAA quality code is new, there is also activity in Quadrant IV, especially with the unexpected closure of the IBC, which I believe was the first closure following introduction of the QAA framework. I intend to revisit this quadrant in my final conclusions to map the shift in my understanding through this research study.

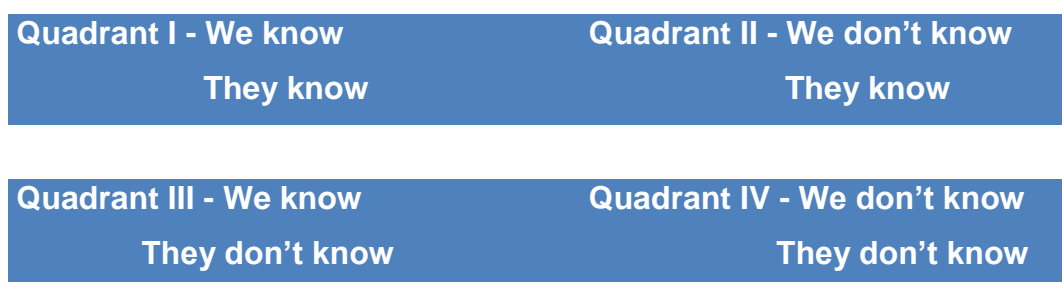


Figure 5 Quadrants of Learning  
McLaughlin (1996)

### 3.5 Scholar-practitioner

As an insider practitioner I must also consider if there are any additional influences to be taken into account.

Schon's 1987 work '*The Reflective Practitioner*' initiated the debate about professionals in action and advocated the need to research how professionals carry out their work. It urged inquiry and action, seen as combined activities. This view was built upon by Boyer in 1990 who discussed the interrelationship between scholarship and practice and has evolved further with McClintock (2004) who introduced the notion of the scholar-practitioner model, which I have found helpful in identifying my position. Within the setting of international education De Wit (2002:105) says

*'international educators were seen more as practitioners, while comparative education was perceived as more scholarly, but even that distinction was not strict'.*

According to this statement I can position myself as a practitioner, taking the view that practitioners should be informed by research. In international education research, there should be a direct application to practice, according to Boyer (1990). The following diagram illustrates that scholars 'study it', whilst practitioners 'do it'. Thus, I am a scholar practitioner since my practice is informed by my research.

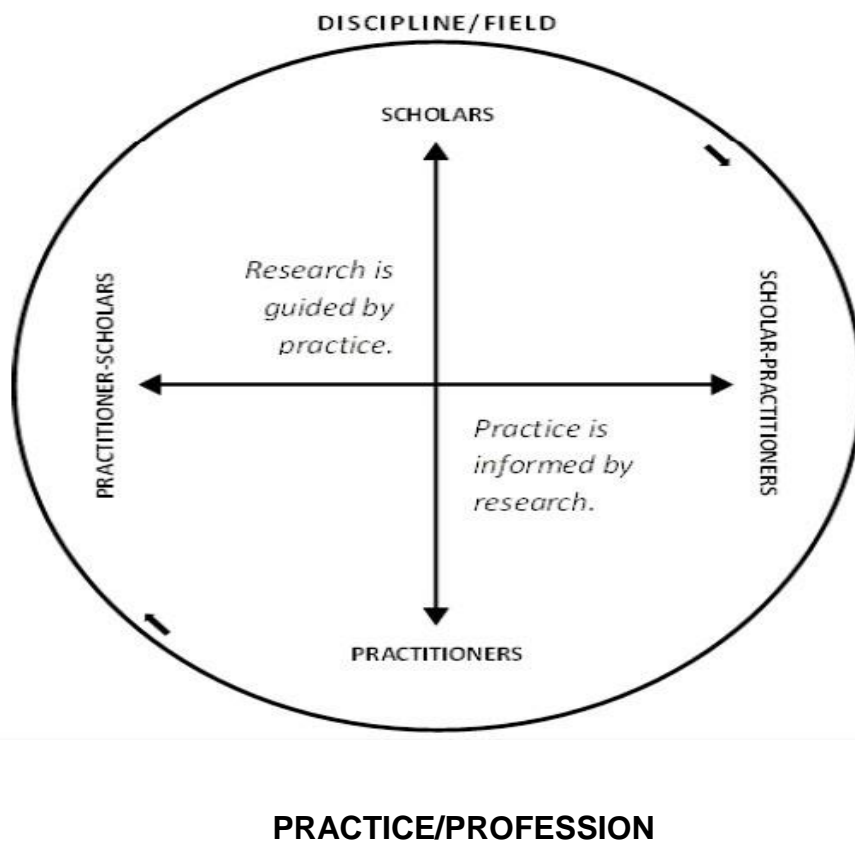


Figure 6 : Scholar Practitioners Derived in part from the work of Boyer (1990), Schon (1995) and McLintock (2001) (per Stritwieser and Ogden (2016:31)

This figure could be seen as the bridge between practitioners and academics. Whilst I am confident as a practitioner in the field of TNE, I need to become more confident as an academic. The work I have undertaken has provided an underpinning to my knowledge which has made me a more enlightened practitioner and assisted my ability to interpret the circumstances I found myself in whilst managing an IBC. Such links between practice and scholarship should be encouraged.

### 3.6 Reflection and choices of research method

At the beginning of my research I used Soft Systems Methodology (SSM). One of the main advantages I initially found was the use of 'Rich Pictures' as is illustrated at page 87. I had some concerns about having to put my thoughts onto paper, which was quite a challenge, not just because I am the least artistic person in the

world but also because I soon realised that it is really difficult to draw some things, which may be clear in your mind and can be articulated, but are difficult to illustrate. However, I persevered and, where possible, simplified the drawing as I believed that the point was more important than producing a masterpiece. Putting my thoughts down as a simple picture certainly helped clarify my thought processes and began the rationalisation of the method of research to be used. As can be seen in my diagram, I initially looked at the situation from both the student's and the tutor's points of view. I soon realised this was too wide and narrowed the focus to lessons learned, since student expectations were more relevant to me. One of the first rich pictures I did related to managing expectations as illustrated on the next page.

The essence of the concept of IBC was initially appraised through a process of SSM which is a development within action research. Having identified myself in my previous study as an action researcher, this methodology supported my epistemological position. The major step forward to SSM is based on the idea that this is a system where the user identifies complexity and confusion but then looks to organise exploration of it as a learning system. The process of inquiry is systematic and creates a learning cycle.



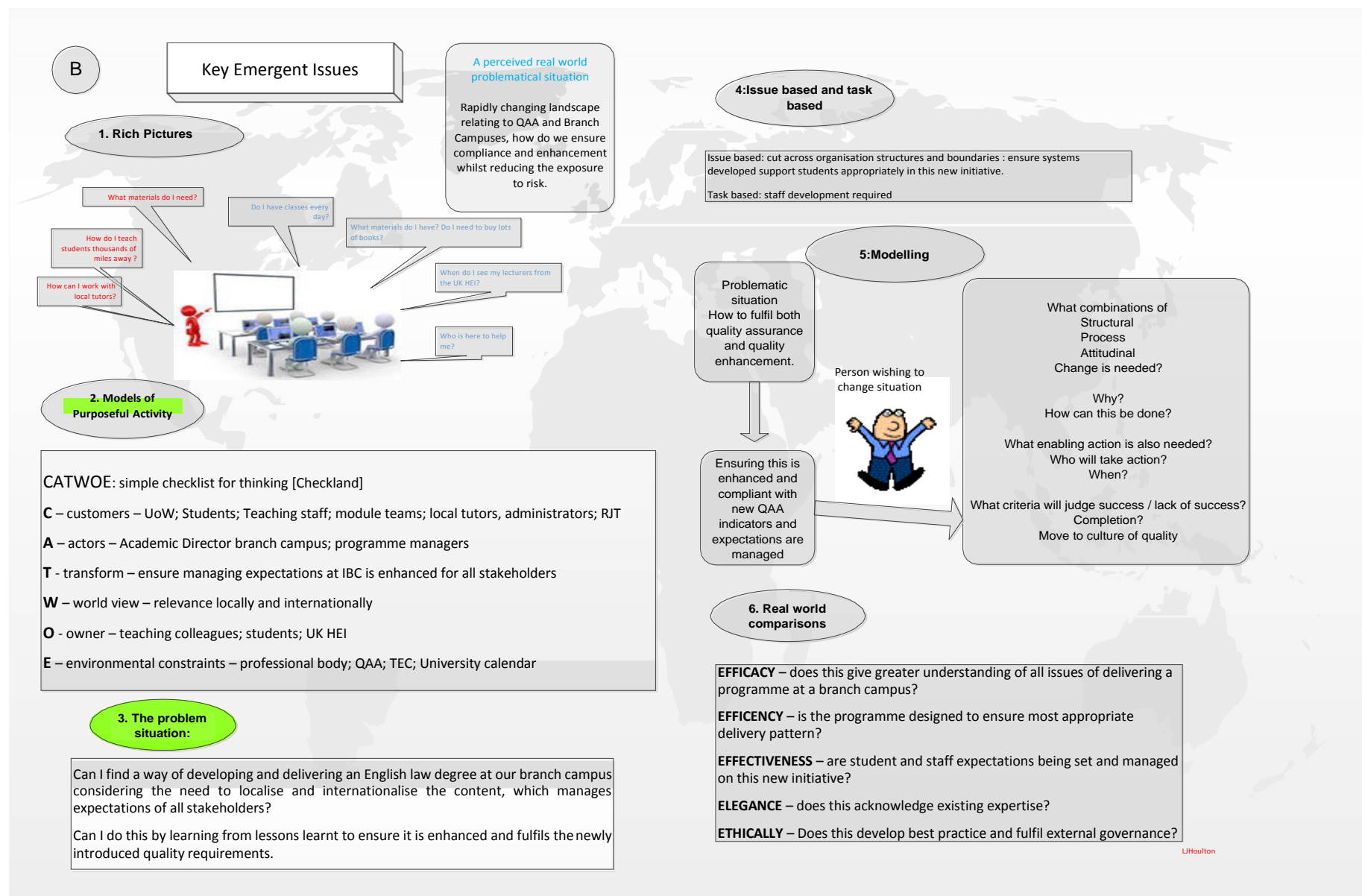


Figure 7 Soft Systems Methodology – Managing Expectations (Houlton: 2013)

The key to the SSM methodology is that it is based upon the principle of there being a problematic situation. This describes the current issue of how to ensure compliance with quality assurance based on criteria introduced in December 2012, some 10 months after the IBC had been opened. According to the Soft Systems Methodology process, this research will provide a 'cycle of learning', whereby it is necessary to take action in the situation to bring about improvement.

A really helpful part of this process introduced by Checkland et al (1990) was 'Finding out about the problematic situation' which involved 'making rich pictures' (1990:31) as a means to represent the situation of concern, including elements which influence the problem, but which would not perhaps be picked up using more formal methods (Darzentas, Darzentas and Spyrou, 1994)).

As a result of this basic overview, the next step which assisted using this methodology was the implementation of both the strategic and operational aspects, making me ask 'what information would support this activity'. Since this is a type of action research, it is necessary to show that other people interested in this area would be able to 'recover' my research and understand how the conclusions had been reached. This work, I hoped, would allow me to show exactly how to audit QAA compliance at a branch campus in any host country and thereafter set out a generic step by step approach which could be used as a guide to set up a branch campus in other jurisdictions.

Since Soft Systems Methodology is a soft system approach, I could relate complex and confused positions and organise exploration of them as a learning system, which is the essence of the process of inquiry and its relationship with a systematic approach.

This step looks at the roles, norms and values of the stakeholders involved and considers the issue of sustainability, especially in relation to recent discussions to phase out flying faculty at the UK HEI and also focus on quality enhancement, as per the focus of the 2014 consultation report 'Strengthening the Quality Assurance of UK TNE' (2013).

The final phase of the research was to record what has been experienced and achieved to date against the principles and understanding of the IBC and where that fits in relation to quality management. According to Healey (2015a), the exposure to risk in an IBC is less than in other forms of TNE, so the quality assurance should be proportional, starting with programme and assessment design and strategic and operational issues of management. However, I am also aware of Armstrong's (2007) contrary view that there is a higher risk in IBCs.

According to Cousin (2009:166) there are strong similarities between action research and a case study approach, although case studies have a holistic concern for the case within a defined time and space, whereas the heart of action research is in the making and observation of a change. Consequently I hoped, by adopting both approaches, I would be able to achieve rigour within my research.

Whilst this initial approach, using SSM, allowed me to develop solid foundations to my research, such as clearly identifying stakeholder involvement and alerting me to issues relating to managing expectations from my colleagues and students, I had to find an alternative method once a decision had been made to close the IBC. This was due to the fundamental concept of SSM which involves modelling relating to desirable and feasible outcomes. There was no longer such a choice to be made

and SSM was no longer a feasible vehicle. Consequently I had to find an alternative method to continue my research.

### 3.7 Ethical considerations

According to Shank (2002), highlighted by Cousin (2009:17), an ethical framework is important and is based on four main notions, which I have used as a checklist to ensure an ethical approach to this study. These are; '*do no harm*'; '*be honest*'; '*be open*'; and '*be careful*'.

Aligning this to my study, as a lawyer I am always mindful of my duty of care. I owe this duty to my employer, the UK HEI. The greatest exposure to risk and therefore 'harm' I had within my study was the possibility of exposing my colleagues or students to any additional risk as a result of the study. I have sought to mitigate this by anonymising the parties involved – the UK HEI and the host country where the IBC was located.

The requirement 'be honest' was one I have not struggled with. The design of this study has allowed me to illustrate what I have done; it does not claim that this is the only way to do things or that it is the best way to do things, merely that it is possible to identify an appropriate solution. My narrative is: I did this, and when looking at my findings, it seemed to be effective. Consequently, I have ensured that data has been provided by a different part of my UK HEI. It is not data which I could influence; it is quantitative data relating to student progression. Being honest allows me to explain that my research journey was not what I expected at the start; I was taken in a completely different direction once the decision to close the IBC was made.

Being 'open' has been less straightforward since there is also the element of commercially sensitive information which I cannot disclose within the study. I have been in a privileged position, having a dual role as a practitioner working within the IBC setting, with access to confidential information, and as a professional doctoral student. There must be a transparency about this situation and a willingness to be open within the confines of commercial sensitivity, ensuring there is no conflict of interest within my dual role. This view was also considered by Healey (2015) who confirmed that commercial sensitivity reduces the amount of information which is freely available.

Using the risk-based quality framework of Chapter B10 highlighted the need to be 'careful'. The shift to continuous monitoring allowed an approach which ensured that any alterations had to be identified through appropriate practices and processes. For example, feedback opportunities were available to students not just at the end of the module, through the module evaluation, but also via an ongoing mechanism with the Lessons Learned Log. I have always been aware of ethical issues and this is one area where a clear audit trail is provided for all decisions made. The duty of care I have was more onerous due to my dual nature as practitioner and researcher.

As Cousin (2007) reminds us, we must not manipulate the situation we are in for the sake of our research. Consequently, the choice of my research questions was considered within an ethical framework, ensuring that, as an insider practitioner, my interpretive approach was based on motives of enhancement and evidenced through quantitative data provided to me, not created by me, plus qualitative data which can

be evidenced through a 'live' continuous monitoring process that then feeds into the UK HEI quality process. This provides an independence to the process. I must also consider the additional ethical issues raised by Costley and Gibbs (2007). I am not aware of ever thinking of the students as 'research subjects'. My main motivation was to ensure the success of the IBC. My research was ancillary to this. I was aware during the process of managing the IBC that it would be the focus of my thesis, and therefore I gathered data along the way, as will be identified later in this study. However, the motivation to identify risks and implement quality enhancement related purely to improving the student experience and maintaining the reputation of the UK HEI.

The 'inside knowledge' I have gained through the privileged position of being involved in the management of the IBC has been used in this study and will hopefully benefit other practitioners in this field. It is necessary to have a 'measure' by which to judge the initiatives and a simple comparison of student completions should provide this. As I have been using an interpretative and reflective approach I based my findings on what has happened. All changes made in relation to quality enhancement have to follow strict processes and procedures and are reviewed in a formal document, the Course Journal, which is reviewed independently within the Faculty and externally through the quality processes of the UK HEI. This, I feel, adds a safety net to my research and reduces exposure to risk.

### **3.8 Case study research**

Since my initial method using SSM became inappropriate during my study I had to identify an alternative.

Case study research is well suited to inquiries into 'processes and relationships' (Denscombe 2008:38) and has allowed me to investigate my proposed area of an IBC most appropriately. Perhaps more importantly, it allowed me the opportunity to investigate issues where they occur in a naturalistic setting (Cousins, 2009:131). Since my work focused on a branch campus it allowed greater depth of understanding to contextualise in this way. The exposure to risk with a case study approach concerns my position as a practitioner involved in both the operational and strategic decision-making processes. As a practitioner-researcher the epistemology is within an interpretivist framework, using an ethical framework and methodology with a duty of care to all involved. As confirmed by Cohen et al. (2000:212), it is important to avoid 'manipulating' human beings.

According to Schramm (1971) a case study can shed light on why certain decisions were made and how they were implemented. I have done this in relation to the two aspects of quality assurance. These decisions are less creative and have to be taken to ensure compliance with external stakeholders, such as QAA and the Professional Regulatory Supervisory Body, which, in this case, was the Law Society of England and Wales. Aspects relating to quality enhancement involve more choice and creativity.

When looking at three key writers in relation to case studies, I initially favoured Yin's approach to case study research, specifically its objectivity and predictability; his realist postpositive approach seeks to provide a structure. Since this is my first case study investigation, the idea of structure and distancing myself from the study, ensuring no bias from my actions, seemed a safe starting point. When reviewing Yin's (2003) work there were three types of case study I could choose from. First,

‘exploratory’ which, according to DeMassis and Kotlan (2014:16) *‘should be used when the aim to understand a phenomenon which takes place’*. This is not the position I found myself in for this case study. Therefore, I needed to consider the second option, ‘explanatory’, which can be used to explain the link between case and context. This sounded more like the situation I found myself in but DeMassis and Kotlan (2014:16) said that this *‘should be used when the aim is to understand why a phenomenon takes place’*. My focus was more towards what was happening and how the actions could be enhanced, so I needed to consider the final option of ‘descriptive’ which did seem to fit better with my situation in that its aim is to present factors to establish cause and effect relationships. At the IBC, since this is a new venture I have no established benchmark to compare outcomes and since the primary ‘descriptive’ purpose is to determine how events occur and which ones may influence particular outcomes, this again did not appear to be an appropriate format.

I therefore considered the work of Merriam (2001), a pragmatic constructivist who identified four designs which may be appropriate for case studies. The first is ‘ethnographic’, which is helpful when looking at extended interaction, thus allowing learned patterns of behaviour to be identified and thereby creating a holistic description of the group. This view was built upon the work of Wolcott (1973) who summarised this approach as teaching us how to behave appropriately in the cultural setting. This approach may have some value in the IBC. However, the focus of my study is not towards the interaction of students or staff; it is more towards identifying enhancement opportunities and minimising risks.

The second option from Merriam was ‘historical’, whereby one can describe events or organisations as they evolve, usually through direct observations and interviews.



According to Hancock and Algozzine (2006:31) the study is '*more than chronology it is descriptive interpretation that both cause and result from the events*'. This option could have been very helpful if I was reflecting over the four year life span of the IBC. However, I was living through the four years and gathering data throughout my experience, so it was not a retrospective study as the historical approach appears to be; it was a lived through experience.

Other options from Merriam relate to 'psychological', generally based on one person or it may be an organisation. The obvious example of this is Piaget's (1983) cognitive structure related to curriculum and instruction. Whilst I anticipated that some of my study would focus on the curriculum, that was not to be the main focus. The final option is 'sociological' which looks at interactions and social relationships and might have been helpful if my main focus was similar to that of Lecompte and Praissle (1993), who looked at the study of potential inequality in student achievement. Again, I intend this to be a part of my study – comparing performance of students at the IBC with that of students at the UK HEI studying the same programmes. Although, realistically, I would only be interested in the data I could gather in relation to ensuring student performance at the IBC improved or at least did not decline once any enhancement activity had been implemented.

I could therefore see some strands which might assist with my study in Merriam. However, the key influence for this study was to be that of Stake, who identifies case study as an 'art', rather than the more scientific approach of Yin. Additionally, Stake says '*it is not unusual for the case to be no "choice" at all*' (1995:3) which replicates the position I found myself in, being appointed as academic director at an IBC which did not at that point in time exist.

The reality of my position within the real world setting of the IBC is that I sat 'inside' the case study. My role as academic director meant I had a liaising role between the UK HEI and delivery in the host country. I needed to know what was happening and as such I needed to immerse myself in my role and build a relationship with the students, tutors and administrative support provided in the host country.

Consequently, I had to position myself with Stake and his interpretative paradigm; my role would be to understand what was happening and interpret the situation.

Stake is a relativist with a constructive/ interpretivist approach. My role would be to translate what was happening at the IBC, to ensure compliance with the QAA Quality Framework, and I would need to follow an interpretivist approach.

The work of Stake (1995) identified three categories of case study research.

*'Instrumental'* assists in understanding a theoretical question or problem with the priority of the study to gain a greater insight into the theoretical explanation rather than understand a particular situation. This was not the focus of my study. I looked at the IBC from a practice basis, focusing on what was happening, rather than asking why. The second option from Stake is *'collective'*, addressing an issue whilst adding to the literature base that helps us better conceptualise theory, usually involving several cases. Since I was to focus on a single case study, this did not appear to be the most appropriate choice. Consequently, the one I used was *'intrinsic'*. *'Intrinsic'* reflects my interest in understanding a particular case, namely, the branch campus in the host country, while not initially aiming to generalise within the case. Within my practice I needed to understand the intricacies of the IBC; I needed to be able to understand the position fundamentally so that I could then identify risks, which I should seek to mitigate, and enhancement opportunities which I needed to evaluate and monitor.

This approach is also well suited to evaluation research (Cousins, 2009:133). However, the value of the evaluation has been debated as providing ‘*fuzzy generalisations*’ (Bassey 1998) in the discussion concerning particularisation – relevance to this one set of circumstances – and generalisations – where what has been found can be conceptualised to meet a variety of situations (Stake, 1995). The conclusion to my research should be specific but also generic. The jurisdiction of the case study should not limit the influence to knowledge gained, neither should the discipline of law.

Case studies in relation to IBCs are sought after as the most appropriate way of learning. This is illustrated by Chalmers (2011:38):

*‘Case studies from real experiences will also provide insights into particular geographical locations and the unique risk implications for those contexts’.*

Continual requests have been made for more case study examples, including Edelstein and Douglas 2012a, Lane and Kinser 2013, QAA 2014 and most recently, the joint OBHE and C-BERT report in 2017. I found the case study a most enlightening way to learn and hope that it will add to the knowledge available by sharing my experiences with my community of practice.

Stake (1995:xi) defined a case study as:

*‘the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances’.*

This should help me understand the position I find myself in with the branch campus. MacDonald and Walker (1975) clarified it as ‘an instance’ and Yin (1994a) as an empirical inquiry, both of which again support my position.

According to Simons (2008), an advantage of using a case study approach is that it is flexible and not time dependent, which fits my current position well. Cousin (2009) talks about the messy terrain which allows for flexibility in the use of the methodology. I felt the need to clarify the situation by using a method which will provide a clear structure and make the data and subsequent conclusions transparent and clear. By referring to Altbach's (2007) McDonalds analogy, and taking into account the introduction of the QAA Quality Framework (2014), this case study example provides a structure which will support case study research generally.

I am aware of the potential weaknesses of case study research and I needed to learn from these when designing my methodology, as illustrated below.

| Issue  | Concept   | Response   |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Bias</b><br>(Rosenthal<br>(1966):                                 | I need to be careful when collecting data,<br>and consider bias when looking at my questionnaire design (Sudman & Bradburn (1982).  | For example I ensured that an independent colleague took the minutes of the meetings.<br>My questionnaire design should follow appropriate guidelines to ensure I get answers which I am not influencing.  |
| <b>Generalisation</b><br>(Lipset, Trow and Coleman (1956 pp419:420): | Particularising would mean that the only value my research would have would be to this one case study example at the specific IBC.<br><br>Generalising would mean that I find conclusions which could apply to a number of case study example IBCs, or even other forms of TNE.   | Using the design of quality assurance and quality enhancement, which is an external benchmark provided by the QAA Quality Framework, should add to the generalising approach.<br><br>My goal is to develop a 'generalising and not a particularising' analysis which by using a lessons learned approach will add to this.   |
| <b>Unmanageable</b><br>(Yin 2014):                                   | There must be a beginning and end to the study, it cannot go on forever. Since this is a live event; the research could continue; I need to ensure that the setting of parameters is logical and defensible. I need to be able to justify the start and end of my study. The important lesson I have learned is that I must not try to do too much. If I do I will merely describe a situation whereas I must critically analyse and add to the knowledge bank. | Initially I planned to focus my research on the first two years of life of the IBC, thus being able to see out the first cohort of the two postgraduate law courses we were delivering. However, since this is a live event I extended my research to the third year due to the decision to close the campus, allowing me to consider the exit strategy, and perhaps most importantly, how to close an IBC. This has shown the advantage of flexibility of using a case study and would also provide completeness to my study. |

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>Comparative advantage</b><br/>Cook &amp; Payne (2002)</p> | <p>I must focus on providing a valuable insight to provide an 'advantage' (Cook &amp; Payne, 2002) 'as adjuncts to experiments rather than as alternatives to them'. I need to ensure rigour and structure in my research. I am not just telling a story; I must justify the choices I have made. The 'how' I complete my study is as important as the 'what' I have found.</p> | <p>I designed the method of lessons to be learned from my own experience of being involved with a branch campus on the basis of what I had learned prior to my engagement from other writers who were for example the Observatory of Borderless Higher Education (OBHE) including writers such as Verbik:2006.</p>   |
| <p><b>Lack of rigour</b><br/>(Yin 2014:19)</p>                  | <p>I need to ensure I have a systematic approach in relation to data gathering to add rigour; a cyclical, reflective approach will add transparency, looking at quality assurance and quality enhancement, which will hopefully mitigate any potential lack of rigour and provide transparency.</p>   | <p>The guidance provided by Yin (2014:1) has assisted me in using the linear approach, prompting me to plan, design, prepare, collect, analyse and share. The shift to continuous monitoring as part of the quality process at the case study example allowed data to be collected continuously, in the form of the Course Journal, which can be populated when any event occurs. Additionally, to support this research, the pilot of a Lessons Learned Log which runs in parallel with the Course Journal allows data to be captured immediately and then reflected upon during the annual review process. When considering what data is required, in relation to qualitative data the focus on quality enhancement allows data to be collected by a more positive mechanism. Whilst it is important to identify any problems/issues, it is also relevant to identify 'what went well' and 'even better if'.</p> |

Table:8 Weaknesses of case study research

I trust that my research will add significantly to the knowledge of branch campuses. Having lived through the experience myself, I hope that the lessons learned will provide a valuable insight and save other practitioners time, thus allowing the student experience to improve. Despite the potential weaknesses identified using case study research I still felt that this was the most appropriate way of capturing data through a variety of sources which should ensure a rich thick description (Geertz 1983) and ensure that different perspectives were gathered. I trust that the reader may gain a valuable vicarious insight through my experience in this case study.

### **3.9 Data collection methods**

The qualitative data which I will be collecting will be based upon a number of key sources, namely using the 6 sources of evidence from Yin (2017:114):

| Source of evidence | Examples to be used in this case study  | Strengths   | Weaknesses   | Examples of avoiding weakness in this case study   |
|--------------------|---|---|--|--|
| 1.Documentation    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emails, letters</li> <li>• Agendas, minutes of meetings</li> <li>• Internal records</li> <li>• Student evaluations</li> <li>• Newspaper reports</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stable – can be reviewed repeatedly</li> <li>• Unobtrusive – not created as a result of the case study</li> <li>• Specific – can contain the exact names, references and details of event</li> <li>• Broad – can cover a long span of time, many events, and settings</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retrievalability – can be difficult to find</li> <li>• Biased selectivity, if collection is incomplete</li> <li>• Reporting bias – reflects (unknown) bias of any given document's author</li> <li>• Access may be deliberately withheld</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to my privileged position as an insider access is not such an issue</li> <li>• I ensured that for example, when minutes of meetings are taken I will ask an independent colleague to take them.</li> <li>• I sought to use reliable sources, for example newspapers with a high reputation</li> </ul> |



|                     |   |  |  |   |
|---------------------|---|--|--|---|
| 2. Archival records | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student progression data</li> <li>• Student admission data</li> <li>• Student module results</li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Same as those for documentation]</li> <li>• Precise and usually quantitative</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Same as those for documentation]</li> <li>• Accessibility due to privacy reasons</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have precluded certain discussions from my studies to avoid commercial sensitivity issues for example my study will not consider the reason for closure of the case study IBC</li> <li>• I sought to use the student progression data to illustrate either an increased or decreased student progression at the case study IBC.</li> </ul>   |
| 3. Interviews       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with staff</li> <li>• Interviews with students</li> <li>• Interviews with key stakeholders</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted – can focus directly on case study topics</li> <li>• Insightful – provides explanations as well as personal views (e.g. perceptions, attitudes, and meanings)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bias due to poorly articulated questions</li> <li>• Response bias</li> <li>• Inaccuracies due to poor recall</li> <li>• Reflexivity – e.g. interviewee says what interviewer wants to hear</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to gain consistency by asking the same questions, for example to staff and students</li> <li>• Arranged interviews as soon after an event as possible to avoid poor recall</li> <li>• Ensured, for example, students realise that responses given may be acted upon to provide enhancement to their experience. Motivation for providing accurate responses is heightened.</li> </ul> |
| 4. Direct           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending unannounced</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediacy – covers actions in real time</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time consuming</li> <li>• Selectivity –</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As an insider practitioner I based my</li> </ul>   |

|                            |  |  |   |  |
|----------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| observations               | during informal seminars, to gauge the amount of student preparation   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contextual – can cover the case's context</li> </ul>  | <p>broad coverage difficult without a team of observers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflexivity – actions may proceed differently because participants know they are being observed</li> <li>Cost – hours needed by human observers</li> </ul> | <p>work based setting, observing is a secondary role to my teaching.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students and staff are used to my presence. For example, I team taught with a tutor who has not previously taught by block delivery, thus giving me access to a variety of settings.</li> <li>Secondary role as such my time is already costed in via my teaching and managerial responsibilities</li> </ul> |
| 5. Participant Observation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lessons Learned Log which I will pilot to add to the formal Course Journal</li> <li>I teach so can gauge the classroom interactions</li> <li>I chair meetings including staff student liaison</li> <li>I would add 'critical incidents' to this source</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[Same as for direct observations]</li> <li>Insightful into interpersonal behaviour and motives</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[Same as for direct observations]</li> <li>Bias due to participants'-observers' manipulation of events</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both staff and students are used to my presence</li> <li>My role is to identify enhancement opportunities which have been raised by either staff or students; my influence relates to the solution rather than the cause; my role is restricted</li> </ul>  |

|                       |                                |   |   |  |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|--|
| 6. Physical Artefacts | None identified for this study | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insightful into cultural features</li> <li>• Insightful into technical operations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selectivity</li> <li>• Availability</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None identified for this study</li> </ul> |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|--|

Table 9 Data collection for case study research - Taken from Yin (2017:114)

This is further validated by Mac Naughton et al (2001) who state that if you are using an interpretivist paradigm the methods should be predominantly quantitative, although qualitative methods may also be utilised and data collection tools should be, for example interviews, observations, document reviews and visual data analysis.

### 3.9.1 Lessons Learned Log

Dwyer and Buckle (2009) say that, for an insider researcher, the impact of insider epistemology has been considered by qualitative researchers. Asselin (2003) has advised that I need to gather data 'with my eyes open' and assume I know nothing about the phenomenon being studied. This was difficult due to experience I have of other TNE provision and the role I have as a manager. In order to mitigate this I am reminded by Rosenthal (1996) that I need to avoid bias and I will ensure that minutes of meetings are taken by an independent third party. I realise that any communication could in due course amount to qualitative data, so there is a need to capture it sensitively.

Continuing the need to continuously monitor the student experience I decided to pilot a Lessons Learned Log which would then feed into the formal Course Journal structure which was part of the quality monitoring at the UK HEI.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) provide a view of Strieb's work using a journal to reflect and learn lessons from her own professional practice. I decided to use this approach in my research, partly dictated by the University introducing a 'new' format to quality assurance, namely a 'Course Journal'. However, due to the need to have a proactive as well as reactive approach, I decided to adapt this to a 'Lessons Learned Log' to illustrate not only quality assurance but also quality enhancement. When looking at the work of Anderson and Herr (1999), it is clear to see that the validity criteria for practitioner research need to be considered carefully. Geertz (1983) identifies the issue of tacit knowledge and, as a practitioner, this provides a source of inside information, which I need to beware of. The 'Lessons Learned Log' I believed

would also allow me to identify risks and quality enhancement opportunities which I would consider in my findings for this completed research.

Using an interpretative paradigm the majority of data will be qualitative. However, to strengthen my research, I also used some quantitative data. I have previously highlighted the weakness in quantitative data in the area of TNE due to problematic definitions. To avoid this weakness I have ensured that the quantitative data I use is from a reliable source which is credible and which I cannot influence. Considering the interpretative paradigm, Cohen et al. (2007:33) lists attributes associated with this paradigm and confirms that this research is inter alia, '*...individual, subjective, personal involvement as a researcher, interpreting the specific, practical interest...*' This mirrors my position in this case study setting. I need to understand and interpret what is happening; this will allow me to identify risks and enhancement opportunities.

Qualitative data ensures that the subject, which in my case is the case study IBC is not explored through one lens. According to Geertz (1973:9)

*'what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to'.*

This illustrates that my role is key and my previous experience in practice, being involved with TNE, will support the important aspect of data collection. My role is further clarified by Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991) who confirm that it is not 'value-neutral' and that the relationship between theory and practice and my position means that I will be implicated in the study. I will seek to minimise my control and remember that my role is to interpret, not create, data.

### 3.10 Quantitative

As is illustrated in the table above, there should be a variety of collection methods used. The collection of quantitative data relating to student progression will be an integral part of this study. I intend to make a comparison with student performance at the UK HEI across two law programmes. One will be the 3-year, full-time, undergraduate law degree [LLB] and the second will be a 2-year, part-time postgraduate programme [LLM Common Professional Examination]. Both of these courses are subject to the UK professional body regulations. I feel this will be a good comparator since both sets of students, those at the IBC and those at the UK HEI, will study the same materials.

The IBC students will additionally benefit from localised contextualisation from local tutors. They will sit the same assessments at the same time and the assessments will be marked anonymously by the module team at the UK HEI. The tutors have no idea where the student is based. There is no visible distinction between students' work as the same examination booklets or assignment front sheets are used. This data will add rigour to my findings and will illustrate if the developments introduced at the IBC aimed at quality enhancement have added to the success of students studying at the IBC. By making a comparative analysis between UK based students and those at the IBC I wish to ensure that the changes prompted as quality enhancement initiatives do not disadvantage the students, since they were a proactive attempt to improve student experience without disadvantaging their progression. As such, data analysis is not aimed at comparing performance per se, which, due to the differences in cohort size, would not necessarily be a 'like for like' comparison, with the UK having much higher numbers on the undergraduate LLB,

while the IBC has much higher numbers on the postgraduate LLM.

### 3.11 Qualitative

The initial qualitative data which I will be referencing will be that of the lessons learned from the existing case study examples of IBC, whereby current practitioners, such as Knight, Gopal and Healey, share lessons from their practice which is qualitative in nature, relating to their experiences, and is validated in practitioner journals, such as the Journal of Studies in International Education, the Journal of International Education & Leadership and the International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, which I will use to help me identify risks which I can hopefully avoid in the case study IBC.

I intend to illustrate how I sought to mitigate these risks and then show if it has been possible in considering quality enhancement, to not only avoid the risk but add to the student experience.

A qualitative perspective allowed me to consider a variety of options before I identified the case study approach as being most appropriate. The alternative interpretative orientations to consider are 'phenomenological' which allows the researcher to view several people in the same situation, or 'ethnographic' where the researcher's goal is to create a 'cultural portrait' (Hancock and Algozzine, 2006:9). Additionally, the 'grounded theory' researcher seeks to create a theory that explains some action, interaction, or process, while a 'biographical studies' perspective includes life histories and highlights important themes in a person's life. None of the other four approaches were such a good fit as a case study. A case study approach would provide me with a systematic series of steps designed to provide careful

analysis of the case in question, which for me is the study of an IBC which I have been involved in setting up, operating and closing. The outcome of my research would be a narrative series of illustrative descriptions of the key aspects of the data I collected. I therefore needed to identify what data I would be considering.

Qualitative data provides a more in-depth and rich description but are more prone to bias in those involved since it is based upon a more subjective view. The purpose of qualitative methodology is to describe and understand, rather than to predict and control (Streubert and Carpenter, 1995) which helpfully describes where I find myself. It could therefore be said that the primary goal of qualitative research is to interpret and document an entire phenomenon from an individual's viewpoint or frame of reference (Creswell, 1998; Leininger, 1985; Mason, 2006). This confirms the situation in my current research in which I will use a Lessons Learned Log to audit risks and quality enhancement opportunities and is further supported by the epistemological assumptions underpinning case study research, which has an action element to it. According to McNiff & Whitehead (2011:10)

*'There is a general agreement among the action research community that action research is about: Action and taking action to improve practice, and Research, finding things out and coming to new understandings that is creating new knowledge. In action research knowledge is about how and why improvement has happened.'*

This is a valuable insight which clearly puts the emphasis of research on to the 'how' and 'why' rather than the 'what'. The flow chart below I, illustrates how the data is captured in the Lessons Learned Log and how rigour is ensured:



### 3.12 Continuous monitoring – data analysis

It is important that I maintain my objectivity during the research process, I am aware of the potential for bias in two strands of my research, namely as an insider practitioner and in using the case study method. I ensured during my research design when interpreting my findings and analysing my data that I am aware of the ethical framework and my duty of ‘care’ (Costley & Gibbs 2006). When analysing my data I must not manipulate, (Cohen et al 2000) hence my data collection using the Lessons Learned Log allows me to capture rather than create data. My role is to understand and translate (Stake 1995) which is supported by my interpretative paradigm and coherent with my personal position as an insider practitioner.

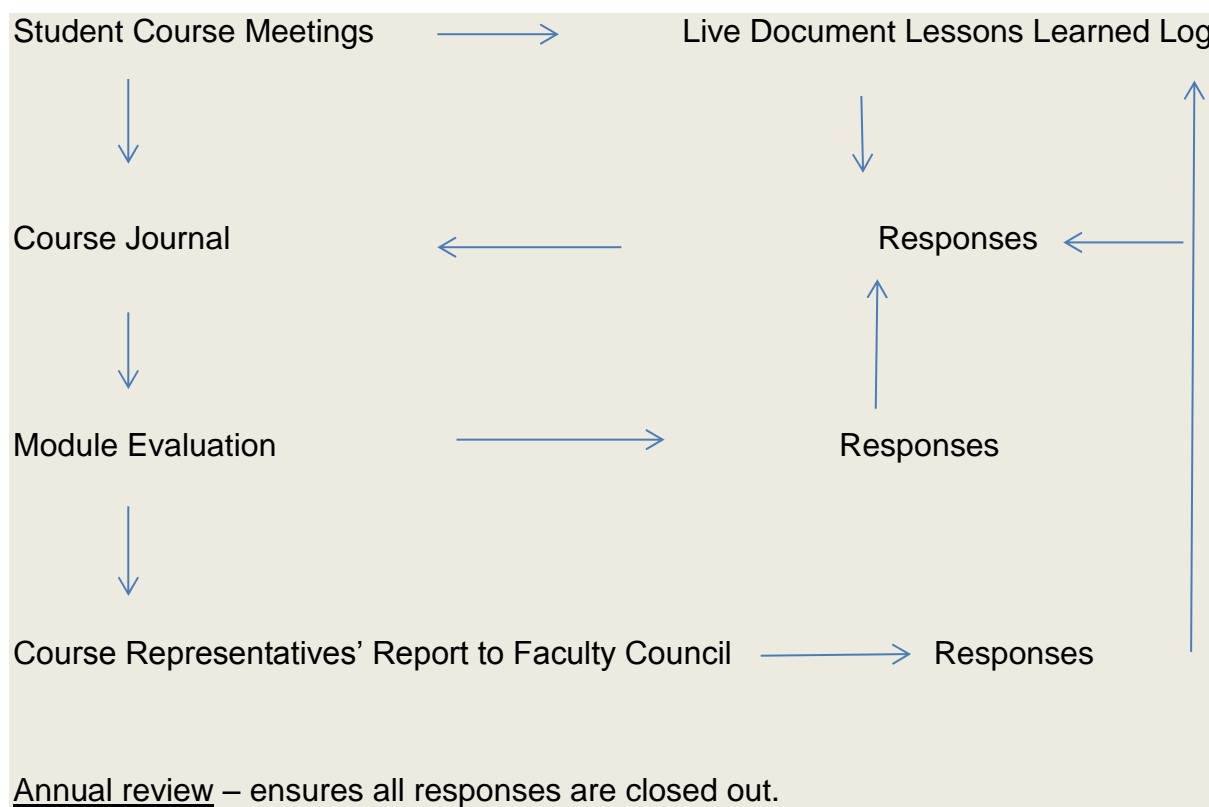


Figure 8– Overview of continuous monitoring process

One of the main sources of data is that of the Lessons Learned Log. This is

fundamental to the shift in data collection from annual monitoring to continuous monitoring which is identified in the QAA Quality Framework and was introduced in the case study UK HEI in the form of a Course Journal. The Lessons Learned Log is a pilot method of continuous monitoring, which I designed and introduced to be used at the case study IBC, thus allowing data collected to fulfil the two main motivations for this study, the shift to the risk-based approach and the focus on quality enhancement. This will then feed into the UK HEI quality mechanism of the Course Journal. The Lessons Learned Log should allow risks to be identified and aid implementation of quality enhancement opportunities.

Questionnaires and course evaluation will also add to the information gathered, which reinforces the importance of continuous monitoring and the shift in relation to prioritising quality enhancement.

Ensuring robust justifications relating to the 'why' I am undertaking this specific research and 'how' I propose to do it is as important as the 'what' I am going to research. It is also important to achieve externality for the knowledge gained; consequently, I looked to my community of practice.

### **3.12.1 Community of practice**

I was invited to join a community of practice based at the HEA focusing on TNE, one of a series of Special Interest Groups [SIG's] set up by the HEA, the aim of which is illustrated below.

## Key aims of the SIG



- To facilitate engagement across the sector on TNE issues.
- To examine how to ensure an equitable student experience no matter where programmes are delivered.
- Identify and develop mechanisms /support to ensure high quality student learning experiences.



11

With the shift in emphasis towards quality and the Quality Framework introduced from January 2014, while the case study IBC opened in March 2012, it was important to identify the changes in regulation and to ensure compliancy with the new framework. The Higher Education Academy funded research and the SIG was formed in 2013 with a series of meetings around the country whereby the community of practice was able to share experiences, and subsequently 'Good Practice', resulting in creation of a toolkit for use by the community of practice. The culmination of the work was the issue of a Good Practice Guide and a conference at Senate House, London in February 2014. The timing was excellent for our findings in the area of QAA since the new Quality Framework had been implemented in January 2014. The 'Good Practice' output from the SIG formed an audit tool to be used to introduce practitioners to Chapter B10.

Additionally, an important issue raised by the group was that of managing expectations about the shift from quality assurance to quality enhancement. A draft 'Welcome Pack' was designed, using the QAA framework, and this was piloted in the case study IBC. Managing expectations remained an important theme in my research, especially on opening the IBC, and this is considered later in this work.

I used these tools in relation to the case study IBC and found them to be most helpful. They were the start of an audit trail which is an important part of ensuring that quality processes are adhered to.

### 3.13 Research design

According to Yin (2017:3) 'it is important to follow a clear methodical path'. Because of my role as an insider practitioner, I am mindful of the weaknesses of subjectivity and bias. By following the guidance provided by Yin (2017) I hope to add rigour to my research through using a clear structure.

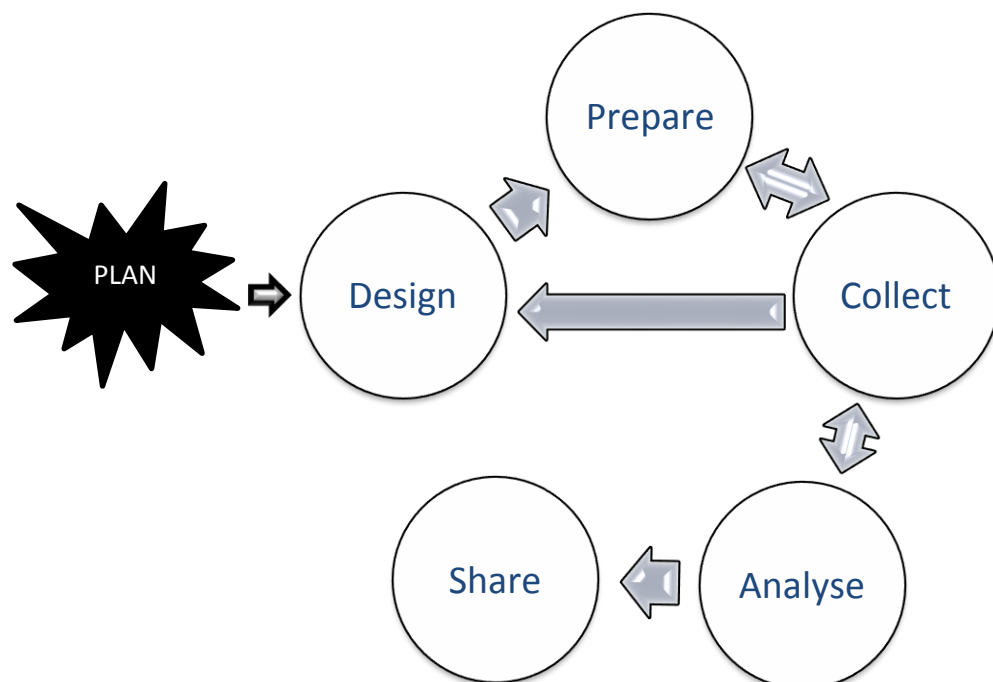


Figure 9 Research structure (Yin 2017:2)

I will use the research design as a road map to guide me on my research journey, rather than as 'logical model of proof'. Like Nachmias and Nachmias (2014) I feel that 'proof' is too subjective and subjectivity is what I am seeking to avoid. I prefer Yin's (2017:288) recommendation of:

*'A plan that logically links the research question with the evidence to be collected and then to be analysed in a case study.'*

I started to follow Yin's guidance concerning 5 components of research design.

### **3.13.1 Research questions**

Planning is an important part of any research. As discussed in the previous chapter, a detailed review of the existing literature has provided me with an insight as to what is already known in the area of IBCs and the evolving landscape of quality within TNE culminating in the introduction of the QAA Quality Framework, implemented from January 2014 . This led me to the define my research questions and is the starting point for my research design. I identified my research questions as:

1. What lessons may be learned from opening, managing and closing an IBC?
2. How does the shift to continuous monitoring assist in identifying quality enhancement opportunities?

### **3.13.2 Propositions**

This area relates to my study objectives and the areas I needed to study in order to be able to answer the questions I set to answer. Each study objective or proposition directs attention to something I need to examine within the scope of my study.

Examples of propositions have been considered within my literature review and include aspects such as reviewing and reflecting on existing literature so that I can learn lessons from current writers and practitioners that will assist me in identifying the risks they encountered and can then consider actions to mitigate these risks in my case study example.

### 3.13.3 The case

It is important that I can identify the exact case I will be studying. The selection of the case for this study was simple. It was the activity I was appointed to within my work at a UK HEI. I was appointed Academic Director to assist in setting up, managing and subsequently closing an IBC. I am therefore researching a single case study, as opposed to using the alternative case study research model of multiple case studies, where, for example, I could compare one IBC with another. As stated previously, one of the weaknesses of case study research is that it can become 'unmanageable' through not having a logical start and finish. I therefore had to clearly define the parameters of my research. Initially I was going to limit my study to opening and operating an IBC. However, my focus shifted due to the decision to close the IBC in August 2016. Rather than seeing this as a setback for my study, I embraced it as a major advantage. It highlighted the uniqueness of my study when it became apparent from reviewing the existing literature that nothing had been written in relation to closing an IBC post the introduction of the QAA Quality Framework.

The case I will be considering is defined below.

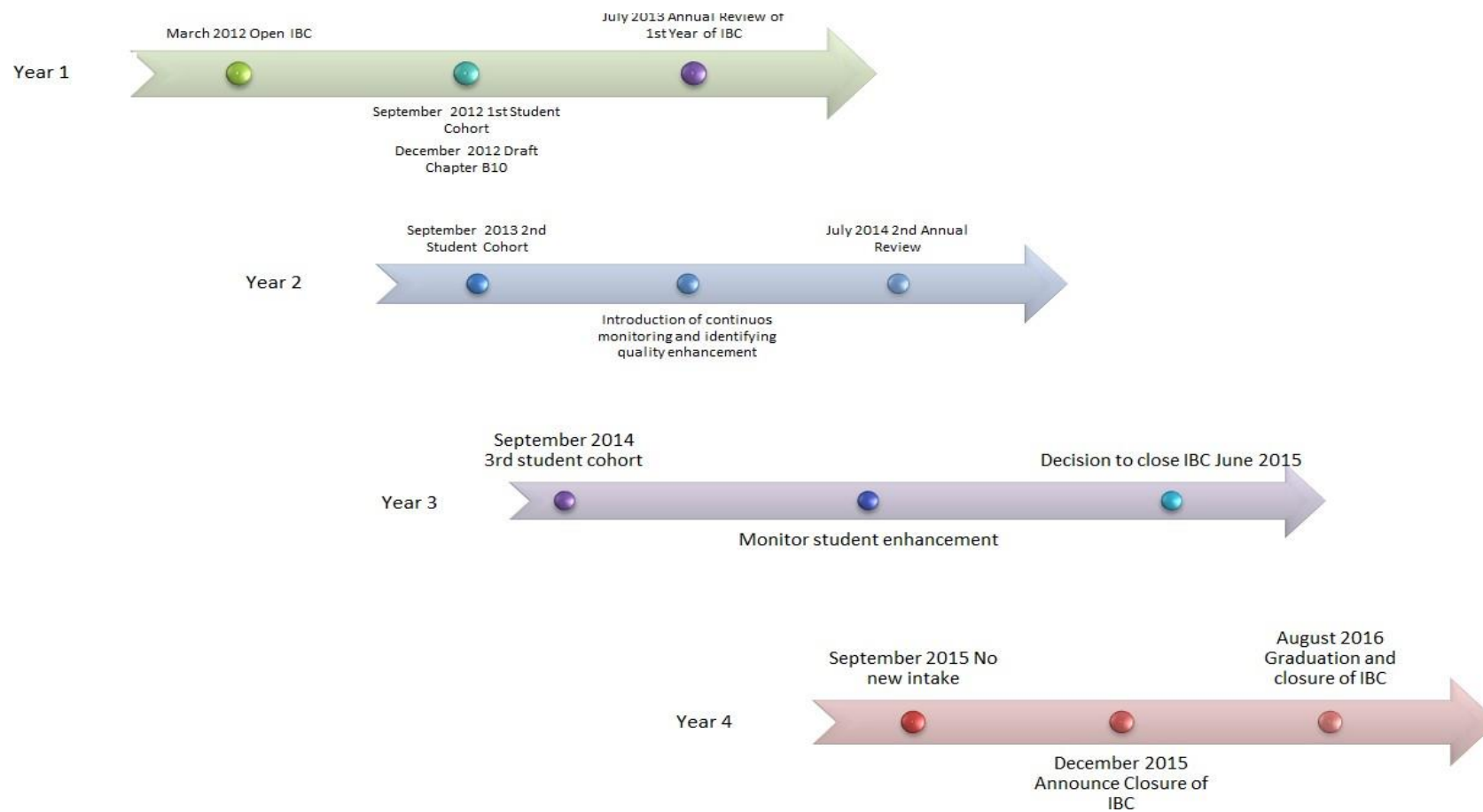


Figure 2– Longitudinal research approach

According to Yin (2017:49), there can be 5 rationales for a single case design, namely it is critical, unusual, common, revelatory or longitudinal. I disagree with Yin that these categories are discrete rationales. My view is that the case study I chose is certainly longitudinal, as illustrated above, in that I have a clear starting point and clear end point and my study focuses on a number of key incidents during a clearly defined period of time from 2012 to 2016. However, I would also propose that this case study is revelatory in that it has a degree of uniqueness as the first UK IBC to close post introduction of the QAA Quality Framework.

Bennett (2010) said:

*'lessons learned from a case study may apply to a variety of situations, well beyond the strict definition of the hypothetical population of 'like cases' represented in the original case'. (Accessed via Yin, 2017:38)*

I hope that my findings will illuminate the theoretical proposition for other practitioners in this field and that my examples of quality enhancement opportunities will encourage other practitioners to at least consider that quality is not just about assurance but also about enhancement, a concept which I feel is more relevant to academics.

#### **3.13.4 Logical linking of data – Data Collection**

As a lawyer, I am always mindful of the need to ensure a direct causal link between supporting evidence and the statement it is meant to support. I have been trained to always consider how else the evidence could be interpreted. The sources of my evidence are identified as set out earlier in this chapter, and are based on Yin's (2018) 6 sources of evidence, as illustrated below:



| Sources of evidence used when carrying out case study research   | Documentation | Archival Records | Interviews | Direct Observations | Participant Observations |
|--|---------------|------------------|------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Research Questions   |               |                  |            |                     |                          |
| 1.What lessons may be learned from opening, managing and closing an IBC?                               | ✓             |                  | ✓          | ✓                   | ✓                        |
| 2.How does the shift to continuous monitoring assist in identifying quality enhancement opportunities? | ✓             | ✓                | ✓          |                     | ✓                        |

### 3.13.5 Criteria for interpreting the findings

I will apply 3 of the 4 tests to judge the quality of my research design, based on Gibbert et al. (2008). This should maintain the rigour of my research and avoid common case study weaknesses. Only 3 of the 4 tests are fully appropriate to this study.

- ‘1. Construct validity: identifying correct operational measures for the concepts being studied*
- 2. Internal validity: This is not required for the ‘descriptive’ case study design I have chosen [see below]*
- 3. External validity: showing whether and how a case study’s findings can be generalised*
- 4. Reliability: demonstrating that the operation of a study –such as its data collection procedures – can be repeated with the same results.’*  
(Yin, 2017:42)

Whilst I agree that the framework approach is helpful I am not a slave to this approach, noting that this is also a point of divergence between Yin’s approach and that of Stake. The axiology relating to values between Yin and Stake illustrates the differences I have found and hence the need to use both approaches – the post positivism approach of Yin, where it is necessary to attempt to control bias, and Stake’s acknowledgement and embracing of the value- and bias-laden nature of the

work (Boblin et al., 2013). This is further confirmed by a difference in research methods.

Stake's view is

*'Research methods are inductive and flexible. Discovery and interpretation occur concurrently. No a priori conceptual framework is required; a flexible beginning conceptual framework might be used. A naturalistic paradigm is used. The search is for "happenings," not causes. The goal is understanding, with interpretation being the primary method of understanding'.* (Boblin et al., 2013:1269).

I use the interpretive stance and adopt a narrative style. This does not fit neatly into the classifications offered by Yin, and relates to point 2 above, where I use the term 'descriptive'. In fact, Stake's 'intrinsic' is a more accurate description of where I see this research positioning me as an inside practitioner. My role is to interpret the findings rather than control events. Additionally, in relation to point 4, my study does not seek to provide a data collection procedure which will repeat results; my aim is to provide a data collection procedure which will allow fellow practitioners to identify the two key elements to my study which have been influenced by the introduction of the QAA Quality Framework – the shift to a 'risk-based approach' and the importance of 'quality enhancement'. By implementing this methodology, my study will seek to identify an appropriate data collection procedure which will allow fellow practitioners to capture data which are appropriate to their individual study in either an IBC or a general TNE setting.

When contextualising the criteria for judging the quality of research designs, Yin's framework is still a viable structure for my study. Below is an adaptation from Yin (2017:43) to which I have added a column relating to my specific study:

| Tests              | Case study tactics                | Examples relating to this case Study   |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Construct validity | Use multiple sources of Evidence  | See table above which confirms multiple sources of evidence  |
| External validity  | Use theory in single case studies | I will be using the 'longitudinal' single case study approach with a holistic view of the case study.    |
| Reliability        | Use a case study protocol         | I sought to develop a protocol but found that this will not be possible due to the nature of this study. |

Table 10 Criteria to interpret findings (Yin 2017)

Because of my hybrid approach to this study, whereby I have not followed Yin's approach totally, I also relied on Stake's approach, and so, rather than ignoring internal validation as proposed by Yin, in undertaking a descriptive study I relied on Stake's approach to internal validity to ensure that the case study had no weakness relating to investigation. Therefore I would like to add to the table above as an interpretivist approach, relying on Stake's. In a later work (2005) he said that there are 5 key requirements for case study – issue choice, triangulation, experiential knowledge, contexts and activities:

*'For a research community, case study optimizes understanding by pursuing scholarly research questions. It gains credibility by thoroughly triangulating the descriptions and interpretations, not just in a single step but continuously throughout the period of study. For a qualitative research community, case study concentrates on experiential knowledge of the case and close attention to the influence of its social, political and other contexts. For almost any audience, optimizing and understanding of the case requires meticulous attention to its activities. (2005, pp. 443–444)*

Therefore my internal validation and reliability are set out below.

| Tests             | Case study tactics       | Examples relating to this case study   |
|-------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Internal validity | Triangulate data sources | I will use a variety of data sources to triangulate my findings. With both qualitative and quantitative data |

|             |                        |   |
|-------------|------------------------|---|
| Reliability | Experiential knowledge | I will seek to record what happens rather than try and influence it. My role will be to identify solutions to issues raised. By using a Lessons Learned Log I am able to capture information continually. |
|-------------|------------------------|---|

Table 11 Validation of data Yin (2017) Influenced by Stake (1995)

Triangulation, according to Stake, relates to accuracy and should reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation. He refers to the triangulation based on Flick (1998) and Silverman (1993), saying:

*‘Triangulation has been generally considered as the process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation. But acknowledging that no observations or interpretations are perfectly repeatable’.* (Stake, 2005:454)

By using a wide cross-section of data sources I trust that this work will be robust since the aim of the study is not to provide a set of circumstances which could be replicated but merely to consider mechanisms which could collect data effectively to gain a valuable insight to continuous monitoring.

### 3.13.5 Data Analysis

The analytical process used in this study is largely determined by my position as an insider practitioner. My role was not to create data but to capture it. I did not wish to influence the issues raised, my role was to provide solutions based upon my experiential knowledge (Stake 1995). Through the lessons learned log I was able to collect the data which then provided the opportunity to carry out qualitative data analysis, in line with the research questions. Cousin (2009:147) provides some assistance in relation to data analysis by asking key questions to support analysis, firstly to ‘*see if there are any clear themes emerging?*’. Secondly, the ‘*claims in the way of fuzzy, petite or grand generalisation?*’. Thirdly, ‘*can you offer*

*chunks of data to underpin your interpretations?*'. Fourthly, *'are there any evocative vignettes to write from observations?'* which further supports the view of Geertz, (1973) who confirms that case study researchers often rely on the notion of thick description. Using an interpretative approach this study seeks to provide an insight which according to Cousin (2009:148) *'...the reader needs to feel that they could be there so that they can share in the interpretation with you'*. Case study research should provide rich understandings with the aim to describe, interpret and persuade the reader Cousin (2009).

### 3.14 Summary

My research is based in an educational setting. My position is that of an interpretative insider practitioner. The setting falls within a single case study which will allow me to provide a holistic view of the lifespan of an IBC. Because I have taken a holistic view, changing circumstances following the commencement of my research study in 2012 have led to the evolution of my research design. Initially I used Soft Systems Methodology, but when a decision to close the IBC was made in 2015 I had to change that methodology to a case study approach. There was a further shift in the scope of my research. Initially, I had anticipated discussing the opening and operation of the IBC, but once the decision to close was made I had to widen the scope of my study to embrace closure, which I identified in my literature review as a gap in the literature. Hence this study should add to an area of developing interest to my fellow practitioners.

The main focus is that of qualitative data which allows me to view the situation through a variety of lenses. I have sought to gather a wide range of data from a variety of sources which allow me to triangulate my findings to add rigour to the analysis.

A key theme in this study is looking at the shift to continuous monitoring which was suggested by the QAA Quality Framework and which enforced change in the case study HEI, away from annual monitoring towards use of a Course Journal, designed to be a live document. This allowed risks to be identified and quality enhancement opportunities to be shared.

My role as an insider practitioner was not to create data but to capture it. I did not wish to influence the issues raised, my role was to provide solutions based upon my experiential knowledge (Stake). The motivation for finding the appropriate solutions was based upon my duty of care to the students and the University (Costley and Gibbs). It is therefore necessary to identify a mechanism which allows me to ensure that the steps taken to enhance the student experience do not adversely affect student performance. Consequently I compared student progression data to ensure that student performance is improved with the introduction of the quality enhancement decisions.

## **Chapter 4 Analysis and Findings**

### **4.1 Introduction**

As previously outlined in this study I review my findings in relation to Years 1, 2, 3 and 4. This is a linear, single case study and the aim of this chapter is to analyse and confirm the findings from the opening of a case study IBC in 2012 to the closing of the IBC in August 2016. I have used a wide range of evidence which I have referenced using Yin (2017) case study design and methods which should add rigour to the study.

For Year 1, I analyse what lessons I learned from the existing literature and then from my own practice in relation to opening an IBC. With the shift to continuous monitoring which was introduced under the QAA Quality Framework I assess the influence and usefulness of the Lessons Learned Log which I piloted in this study. Additionally, in Year 1 I analyse the appropriateness of the mode of delivery for two law programmes which are delivered at the IBC and also at the UK HEI. I continue to reflect and review the delivery mode throughout Year 2 and Year 3 and describe lessons learned throughout the operation of the IBC.

For Year 4, I analyse 'how' the IBC was closed, having made the decision to close in June 2015 with the actual closure taking place in August 2016. I consider what lessons I learned from existing literature in relation to closing an IBC. Where the literature identified that whilst there was research in relation to the reason for closures and the number of closures very little had been written on 'how' to close an IBC. Most importantly, nothing had been written in relation to closing one post the introduction of the QAA Quality Framework. Throughout my study, I have considered

the importance of learning lessons so that the student experience may be enhanced. Continuing this theme I will identify quality enhancement opportunities using the QAA Quality Framework even when planning the closure of the IBC.

#### 4.2 Research Question 1 -Year 1 Lessons I learned from existing literature and putting theory into practice.

Year 1 was the first year of the case study IBC, opening in March 2012, and the subsequent first student cohort admitted in September 2012, culminating in the first annual review in July 2013.



Figure 10 Year 1 Case Study IBC Diagram

As highlighted in the literature review I was able to identify a number of risks in advance of opening the IBC from the previous experiences of my fellow practitioners and the Due Diligence process. Therefore, I sought not only to mitigate and quality assure these risks, but also to look for examples of enhancing the student experience as per the requirements of the QAA quality framework, Chapter B10. I have sought to learn lessons from the existing literature available. As a result of the introduction of Chapter B10 and the emphasis on quality enhancement, I have adapted the work of The University of Calgary – Qatar [Bynre et al] and the framework suggested by Gill (2012) to enhance the lessons learned for other practitioners. Using this as a framework, I add to it using my experiences through reflective practice, additionally reviewing the requirement of enhancement under



Chapter B10, thus turning a potential negative into a positive.

The chart below tracks the analytical framework/ process used which provided me with the structure and rigor to identify the data sources, being both quantitative and qualitative within a case study setting supporting my interpretive paradigm. The integration of the research questions and the timeline within my questions illustrates the consequential sequential learning which evolved over a period of time supported by the continuous monitoring.

|   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| R<br>E<br>S<br>E<br>A<br>R<br>C<br>H<br>Qu's<br>[RQ]                    | Analytical Processes  | Implementing the framework/processes at the IBC  | Enhancement to support QAA Chapter B10  |
|   | Lessons learned from previous literature - for this case study        | My response to avoid risk already identified by previous practitioners   |   |
|   | 1<br><br>Faculty/ staff recruitment & retention<br><br>Altbach (2007) | <b>Induction:</b> Detailed instruction provided to both UK and local tutors who worked closely with module teams in the UK and were debriefed at the end of each semester.   | Formal training for local staff for award of TNE PG Cert. Facilitating capacity building and greater role for local tutors. |
| Qualitative data gathered to support lessons learned in this case study |   | <b>Through direct observations:</b> A formal 'hand over' took place after UK tutors had finished their first teaching block at the start of the module. UK tutors provided outline answers to the seminar questions which local tutors were to deliver, establishing them as part of the module team and allowing initial discussions to take place between the tutors. Local tutors encouraged to enrol on a newly developed PG Cert. |   |

|  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p><b>RQ</b><br/>2</p>   | <p>Maintaining academic standards</p> <p>Development of 'off-the-shelf' programmes that work at home institutions - may not be relevant for host countries (Wilkins 2010)</p>   | <p>Involvement of PRSB; content somewhat dictated – same curriculum but also needs to be 'localised' to provide contextualisation.</p> <p>Benefit of sustainability by employing local practitioners who contextualised the material to ensure the relevance to practicing law in the host country [see evolving role of local tutors below Section 4.4 below].</p> | <p>Ensure audit trail from external examiner confirming performance; provide data comparison of performance across modules, levels and awards.</p> |
| <p>Qualitative data gathered to support lessons learned in this case study</p> | <p><b>Through participant observations:</b> Local tutors were employed to deliver the seminars, these tutors were practicing lawyers in the host country, some were judges. They provided an insight into legal practice and were encouraged to 'localise' the content of their module, while making it clear that the assessment would be based on UK law. Any examples of contextualisation were uploaded to the VLE so that students in the UK could access this material, thus adding to the internationalisation of the modules.</p> |   |  |



|  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p><b>R.Q.</b><br/>2</p>   | <p>Preparing faculty and staff for transition to new culture</p> <p>Dunn &amp; Wallace (2006)<br/>Smith (2009)<br/>Gopal (2011)</p>   | <p>Induction to be formalised; pre-meeting and debrief after with all staff; meeting before going and teach including administrative staff who were able to book flights and hotels. Additionally, at the debrief meeting tutors who were due to teach in following semester attended to 'learn lessons' from tutors who had already been out to teach. No TNE experience 'team teach' first delivery.</p> <p>More use of VLs with TNE experience to avoid tension of abandoning 'home' students - more sustainable model.</p> <p>Cross cultural awareness training required and provided. Tutors lodged at business park hotel - maintains business relationship; use of same hotel enables corporate rates; builds relationships</p> | <p>Cultural mix at UK HEI campus high, so not an issue for staff who were used to working with a variety of cultural mix students.</p> <p>Manage student and staff expectations.</p> <p>Appropriate timing/days of classes (culturally not accepted to be in class all day Sunday – 'family day') - reduced to half a day on Sundays.</p> |
| <p>Qualitative data gathered to support lessons learned in this case study</p> | <p><b>Interviews</b> at debrief meeting where staff who had been to teach in <b>Semester 1</b> met with staff who were due to teach in <b>Semester 2</b>. Issues raised included: <i>'At first I was worried when a bird flew into the room but the students just laughed and said I would get used to it, which I have to admit I soon did'</i></p> <p><b>Documents:</b> Student Forum – Student representative <i>'Staff are to be advised that it is critical to be aware that English is not the students' first language as some staff were found to be a little hard to understand'</i>. Staff will be advised that slides of the areas covered must be provided because of the language weakness.</p> <p><b>Critical incident:</b> Using the same hotel allowed a good relationship to be built with the hotel and teaching staff who were at the hotel for 10 days at the start of the semester, and generally there would be 3 or 4 staff together to support each other, whilst working overseas. It was decided to use Visiting Lecturers to deliver some of the teaching. A valuable lesson I learned was that, due to the attractions of the host country, one visiting lecturer was accompanied by his wife. Whilst the tutor was covered by the case study UK HEI travel insurance, his wife was not. Unfortunately, his wife fell down a drainage ditch whilst out walking and seriously injured her back. She was not fit to fly back to the UK for some time, during which period the visiting lecturer had no means to get to the hospital to visit his wife. Due to the</p> |  |   |

|   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
|   |   | relationship we had built with the hotel, the hotel provided a car and driver to take him to the hospital whenever he required. Additionally, the extended period of stay required at the hotel due to his wife being unfit to fly was offered at a discounted rate, which we were able to reclaim from our travel insurance.  |   |
| R.Q.<br>1   | Developing and supporting teaching strategies<br><br>(Gopal 2011) | <p>Use of DL materials as back-up, plus UK and local tutors.</p> <p>Introduction of mock assessments this initiative was not successful, not taken up by students.</p> <p>Evolution of seminar delivery to ensure students prepare – setting up ‘informal seminars’.</p> <p>Need to consider ‘plan B’ – risk assessment.</p>   | <p>Show delivery pattern/system to ensure student engagement has evolved to be most appropriate for this environment: to be used for new and re-validation.</p> <p>Ensure where possible same class contact hours – based on initial 30 hours block delivery [see below for detailed discussion on evolving delivery pattern].</p> <p>Equivalence of experience is difficult to prove whereas equivalence of academic standards is possible to prove due to the students taking the same assessments.</p> <p>Difficulties in relation to physical resources, although electronic resources supported student learning well.</p> |
| Qualitative data gathered to support lessons learned in this case study |   | <p><b>Documents:</b> Introduced mock assessments ‘<i>Mock assessment opportunities were given to all students to try and provide an opportunity to practice their assessment skills. Mock assessments were timetabled into the teaching schedule. The take up for this was disappointing but the opportunity will be offered again</i>’ [Course Journal entry Nov 2013].</p> <p>Evolution of seminar delivery, seeking to ensure students prepare, setting up ‘informal seminars’.</p> <p><b>Documents:</b> External Examiners’ comments: ‘<i>I am confident that the correct procedures were followed and that great care was taken to ensure consistent treatment of students</i>’ [Course Journal – entry July 2013].</p> |   |

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p><b>R.Q.</b><br/>2</p>   | <p>Providing academic support to students</p> <p>(Rostron 2009)</p> | <p>Challenging – accessing electronic materials; need study skills support from local/UK tutors when offshore</p> <p>Skype link when students enrol identifying problems which could later cause access issues.</p> <p>Western expectations – active learning , critical thinking study skills important; need support to avoid academic misconduct.</p>  | <p>Use of local study skills tutor – identified and trained; Student Mentors to support new students.</p> <p>Introduction of use of Turnitin – allows students to monitor own submissions of work to avoid academic misconduct.</p> <p>Student were allocated a Personal tutor based at UK HEI – part of the flying faculty team, provision of interaction with students.</p> |
| <p>Qualitative Data gathered to support lessons learned in this case study</p> |   | <p><b>Documents:</b> Lessons Learned Log ‘<i>some students were unable to enrol during the induction in September 2012</i>’ Consequently, ensured that for subsequent enrolments a Skype link was set up so that representatives from the appropriate administrative support team in the UK were ready to assist in real time to ensure all students were enrolled, and thus able to access all electronic materials.</p> |   |

Table 12 Lessons Learned from previous literature for this case study with responses

| Analytical Framework   |   | Implementing at the IBC  | Enhancement introduced, supported by QAA Chapter B10  |
|--|---|--|---|
| Issue – Lessons learned from Gill (2012)                                 |   | My response to avoid risk already identified by previous practitioners   |   |
| R.Q.<br>1.   | Regulations regarding IBC                             | Identify stakeholders: QAA, TEC, PRSB, UK HEI  | Carry out regular reviews, ensure clear audit trail   |
| Qualitative data gathered to support lessons learned in this case study. |   | Soft Systems Methodology allowed all stakeholders to be identified; thereafter, engagement took place with each body to identify regulatory requirements.  |   |
| R.Q.<br>1.   | Qualifications recognised locally and internationally | PRSB to confirm in both jurisdictions  | Ensure written confirmation; ensure period of recognition and renewal process are known.                        |
| Qualitative data gathered to support lessons learned in this case study  |   | <b>Document:</b> JASB validation report highlighted good practice as ' <i>An awareness of the need for consistency across areas of course delivery and student support and processes already in place designed to achieve this</i> '. It was confirmed that ' <i>Accreditation/continuing approval for the period: September 2012 to July 2015</i> ' Approval Record 2012. |   |
| R.Q.<br>1.   | Programmes approvals, procedures and Timescales       | UK HEI; in country requirements, period of validation; period of review; ensure all approvals in place BEFORE delivery.  | Review, update programmes, ensure lessons learned to improve. Engage with local professions to ensure relevant. |
| Qualitative data gathered to support lessons learned in this case study  |   | <b>Participant Observation:</b> Continuous monitoring takes place via the Lessons Learned Log which I attached as <b>Appendix B</b> in the formal documentary source to the case study UK HEI Course Journal. Additionally, an annual review takes place to reflect on any issues raised and to identify   |   |



|  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
|  | any enhancement opportunities. |
|--|--------------------------------|

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <b>R.Q</b><br>2.  | Limitations not immediately obvious (age restrictions) | If an 'African Hub' is planned, students in Africa finish studies at 17 and need a 'foundation year' to bridge the gap to age 18.  | Continual risk assessment needed, changing circumstances.  |
| Qualitative data gathered to support lessons learned in this case study |  | <b>Critical Incident:</b> Students who were at the IBC, but who usually live in Africa were refused entry to the host country when they sought to return for the start of the new semester, due to the Ebola crisis. Since they could not return to study at the IBC – plan B was required. The alternative mode of study was to transfer to the distance learning course. |  |
| <b>R.Q</b><br>1.  | Student/ employment visa category                      | Must ensure all students are aware of restrictions prior to enrolment.   | Liaise in country to consider 'work experience' and ensure visa conditions are not infringed.  |
| Qualitative data gathered to support lessons learned in this case study |  | <b>Interview:</b> Meetings took place with the British High Commission and the Minister of Education to confirm that work experience would not infringe student visa status.   |  |
| <b>R.Q</b><br>1.  | Choice of name (what does it mean locally)             | Cultural awareness needed.   | Ensure cultural sensitivity e.g. students' 'union' in some jurisdictions not acceptable [e.g. China], so rename students' 'society'. |

|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| Qualitative data gathered to support lessons learned in this case study |  | <b>Critical Incident:</b> Some students transferred to case study HEI from another UK HEI, 'Middlesex.' When asked why, one parent said 'they were embarrassed by 'inappropriate name'. |  |
| <b>R.Q</b><br>1.  | Company law, taxes and repatriation of Funds | Must employ local agents to check this. Must comply with local laws.  | Must employ both lawyers and accountants from each jurisdiction. |

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| Qualitative data gathered to support lessons learned in this case study |  | <b>Document:</b> Local lawyers were employed to draft the local tutors' contracts of employment, for example Clause 8 states ' <i>the UK HEI will not be liable to pay any local taxes for which you may be liable as a result of this employment.</i> ' |  |
|---|--|--|--|

Table 13 Lessons Learned from Gill with responses

| Based on the Lessons I have Learned from my experience of this case study: |                               |   |   |
|--|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Issue – Lessons Learned from my Practice                                   |                               | My response to avoid risk   | Enhancement to support QAA Chapter B10  |
| <b>R.Q</b><br>2.   | Managing student expectations | <p>Discrepancies between full- and part-time students.</p> <p>Important that this is raised prior to enrolment to show students when classes will be.</p> | <p>Questionnaire used when designing new building, ensuring priorities from students were considered. Students need to feel involved and part of their learning experience.</p> <p>Evolution of delivery pattern [see below for a detailed discussion].</p> <p>Introduced mechanisms to ensure students prepare for seminars [see below for a detailed discussion].</p> |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Qualitative data gathered to support lessons learned in this case study</p> | <p><b>Archival records:</b> An issue raised by students was that seminars take place in twilight, delivered by practicing lawyers and judges in the host country. Updated webpage to ensure this is clear.'</p> <p><i>Q. When will the classes take place?</i></p> <p><i>A. Classes will be held after 5pm on weekdays as well as during weekends (Saturdays and Sundays).'</i></p> <p><b>Questionnaire:</b> After the first year of delivery an Annual Review questionnaire was sent out. One question asked: Has your course been as expected? Responses included: <i>'The course was carried out in a completely different way as I expected but it was done in an awesome way. I loved it!'</i> Other responses included: 'yes' and 'no'.</p> |
|--|---|

|   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
| <b>R.Q</b><br>2.  | Ensuring integrity of assessments  | Use external agency   | Need to ensure the scheduling of assessment boards takes into account time delay in getting scripts to mark once posted to the UK.                      |
| Qualitative data gathered to support lessons learned in this case study |  | [MES] – an external body was used to invigilate all examinations, this meant that exam papers were not sent to the IBC, which ensured that the integrity of the paper was maintained and the exposure to risk was minimised. This body was more stringent than British Council and a protocol was drafted to ensure assessments sent in timely manner in strict format – signed and sealed envelope with letter instructing when to open envelope, otherwise pack will not be opened. |   |
| <b>R.Q</b><br>2.  | Provide benefit to all students not just those based at branch campus.                           | Consider more interaction and opportunities.  | Work placements; ability to study a module or semester at branch campus or at main campus; competitions between cohorts nationally and internationally. |
| Qualitative data gathered to support lessons learned in this case study |  | <b>Interview:</b> meetings took place with the Students Union at the case study UK HEI to identify opportunities for student exchanges. There were hopes of achieving more in this area. However, when a decision to close the campus was made, this ended potential development.   |   |
| <b>R.Q</b><br>2.  | Relationship should not just be based on 'teaching', should also include research opportunities. | Look for funding opportunities in country of IBC.   | Capacity building – consider offering PhDs to ensure sustainability of faculty staff and teaching and learning enhancement.                             |
| Qualitative data gathered to support lessons learned in this case study |  | <b>Archival records.</b> I was invited to attend Conference Research Council 19th September 2014.<br>Collaborative Research and Innovation Grant.<br>Web link:<br><a href="http://www.mrc.org.mu/funding_schemes/innovation_and_commercialisation_schemes">http://www.mrc.org.mu/funding_schemes/innovation_and_commercialisation_schemes</a><br>The aim was to identify funding opportunities.   |   |

|   |                                      |  |  |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>R.Q</b><br>2.  | Carry out risk assessments regularly | Learn from new environment   | Expect the unexpected<br>Update risk register<br>Ensure forms part of the induction for flying faculty, whereby tutors who go out in Semester 1 meet with tutors who are due to go out in Semester 2 as part of the debrief. |
| Qualitative data gathered to support lessons learned in this case study |                                      | <b>Critical incidents:</b><br>1. One tutor became ill on the plane whilst flying out to teach and had to go to hospital on arrival in the host country. The diagnosis was pneumonia which could have been contracted on the plane. It was helpful that this tutor was travelling with colleagues who were able to give support and also teaching cover. This reinforced the importance of tutors travelling together where possible.<br>2. It is important that health issues are raised confidentially prior to travelling so that appropriate flights can be booked. Certain medication is 'banned' in Dubai. Therefore, flights with Emirates are not appropriate if this medication is being taken.<br>3. One tutor suffered a blow to the head from the room safe door, causing a head injury. This tutor had to go to hospital for a scan.<br>As a result of this type of incident a mobile telephone was provided to flying faculty staff with a pre-programmed 'help line' telephone number to alert representatives in the host country to provide immediate support. |  |

Table 14 Demonstrating Lessons Learned by my experience of this case study IBC

| Sources of evidence when carrying out case study research |  |
|---|--|
| Documentation   | Records kept e.g. emails, minutes of meetings  |
| Archival records  | Organisational records e.g. student progression data   |
| Interviews  | Formal and informal e.g. interviews with staff and tutors and ministers  |
| Direct observations                                       | Observation where I am not involved other than as a 'watcher' of human interaction or physical environment e.g. watching students in seminars with a local tutor |
| Participant observations                                  | Observations where I am involved e.g. I am teaching a class, Lessons Learned Log   |

Table 15 Sources of evidence when carrying out case study research YIN – (2017:114) – examples of evidence

#### 4.2.1 Analysis of Year 1 delivery model

A major consideration at the validation stage was to ensure that the programmes we were going to offer at the newly created IBC were 'equivalent' to those offered at the main campus in the UK. 'Equivalence' was the external benchmark set by the QAA in the 'Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education' which was first published in 1999 and subsequently updated in 2004. In 2004 there was a shift in thinking away from equivalence-based to outcome-based. Hence the importance of the need to compare student achievement at the end of each module for those students studying at the IBC and those who studied at the home campus in the UK, which I will do by comparing student progression data.

However, 'equivalence' is still relevant as confirmed in the QAA 2004 code of practice which states:

*'... it would be a pity not to take the opportunity to consider 'equivalence' of learning opportunities when collaborative or FDL provision does have an equivalent 'home' programme leading to the same named award. In such cases, an institution could well find value in considering how the learning opportunities available to students compare between the collaborative or FDL provision and the 'home' provision.'*

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2004:9.

(FDL relates to 'flexible and distributed learning')

Consequently, it was important to continue to consider 'equivalence' between students at the IBC and those at the home UK campus. There appears to be a shift back to 'equivalence' with Chapter B10 Indicator 11, especially in relation to academic standards.

Compared to my previous experience of delivering TNE, the biggest difference I found was in delivering a full-time programme from a distance. Part-time delivery is less difficult to replicate clearly it is not possible to replicate full-time delivery. There

are a number of options; first, flying faculty, whereby tutors from the UK HEI fly out to teach local students,. Wilkins (2010) discusses the potential options of staffing an IBC and confirms that the 'low cost model' of operation relies on faculty recruited locally from the host country whilst the other extreme includes flying faculty, where tutors from the home campus arrive at the IBC for short, intensive periods of teaching. In our model, tutors from the home university were generally at the campus for ten days, which allowed block delivery over weekend periods and classes in the evening during the week.

My previous experience of TNE provided a good starting point and continued to work well with our part-time postgraduate law course whereby students had 30 hours face to face teaching by the UK tutor. Consideration had to be given to the fact that these students were working full-time. As such, the timing of the classes had to be realistic and balanced with the pedagogical needs of both tutor and students.

When considering a model for delivery one has to be aware of the requirements of Chapter B10 in relation to 'equivalence' of experience, as I highlighted at a conference in Asia Pacific Hong Kong for academic leaders in 2007.

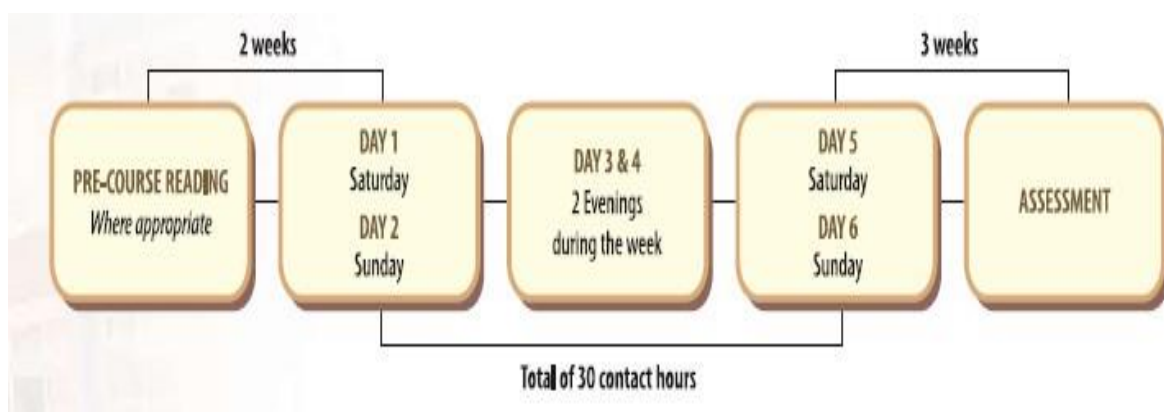


Figure 11 Illustrate original TNE delivery model used in Hong Kong Asia Pacific Conference 2007 (Houlton 2007)

This model had been used since 2005 in a partnership with a University in Hong Kong where we delivered one of the same programmes as in the host country, which was a part-time postgraduate law programme. This therefore became the model used for delivery in Year 1 of the IBC at the case study UK HEI.

Based on the lessons I learned from this initial delivery in Hong Kong it was important to work with the local professional body to ensure that the programme was relevant to local needs and at the appropriate level. In Hong Kong, the relevant body was the Hong Kong Law Society and, to ensure that the level of the content was appropriate, I delivered a shortened version of one of the modules as a Continuing Professional Development course [CPD] for local practicing lawyers in 2005. This was very well received and ensured that the backing of the professional body was added to the accreditation of the course, so that practicing lawyers in Hong Kong could attend a module and receive CPD points. This added credibility and an additional market to the programme. I sought to replicate this in the host country. However, the equivalent professional body was not so mature and there was not a formal requirement for lawyers to undergo CPD training, but I met the Chief Justice who was interested in using the model in the future in the host country.

As well as engaging with the appropriate professional body the lessons learned from my exposure in Hong Kong also included engagement with the appropriate Education Authority. In Hong Kong that body was the Continuing Education Fund [CEF]. This is a Hong Kong Government initiative whereby:

*'In June 2002, the Government set up the Continuing Education Fund (CEF) to subsidise those with learning aspirations to continuous education and training programmes. The aim is to help people pursue continuous learning, thereby*



*preparing Hong Kong's workforce for the knowledge-based economy. Eligible applicants will be reimbursed 80% of their fees, subject to a maximum sum of \$10,000, on successful completion of a reimbursable course.'*

[https://www.wfsfaa.gov.hk/cef/en/course\\_provider.htm](https://www.wfsfaa.gov.hk/cef/en/course_provider.htm)

Therefore, by working with this body, it was possible to identify that 5 out of the 8 modules would attract CEF reimbursement, again adding to the value and relevance of our programme.

Seeking to learn from this experience when tasked with setting up the same programme in the host country, I engaged with the Tertiary Education Council [TEC] and the host country Qualification Authority [MQA] in 2012 prior to the opening of the IBC, and it was confirmed that if we registered our modules as CPD courses then students could reclaim up to 60% of their fees. The application to get the modules recognised was based on the regulatory framework host country Qualifications Authority Act 2001 (as amended under the Education and Training (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2005) and the host country Qualifications Authority (Registration) Regulations 2009. Based upon our experience in this area the case study HEI was asked to provide a framework for CPD provision for lawyers in the host country.

#### **4.2.2 Full-time course delivery – maintaining academic standards**

It is important to ensure that the programmes being delivered are appropriate to the students at the IBC, not just off-the-shelf programmes that work at home institutions and may not be relevant for host countries (Wilkins 2011). However, Lane (2011:10) warns that of 'the fear that adaptation would lessen the quality and negatively affect

the name of the home campus'. Shams and Huisman (2012:110) remind us that the curriculum 'has to fit – to some extent – the local circumstances', further stating:

*'the challenge for the university therefore seems to be to localise the curriculum while at the same time trying to offer identical courses, degrees, and learning experiences to both groups of students'.*

The work of Dunn and Wallace (2006) provided a valuable insight into the experiences of Australian academics and their practice of TNE. This work acknowledges the framework of delivery suggested by the case study university, namely:

*'In between are the models of an intensive period of block teaching by the Australian academic with ongoing tutorials by the local academic.'*  
(2006:358).

This is further supported by Debowski (2003:1)

*'it is generally recognized that regular teaching by Australian academics significantly enriches the local program. This is particularly so when it is recognized that universities generally send their more experienced senior teachers to teach off-shore. Overseas customers highly regard those who have doctorates.'*

This became an important part of the design of the delivery as well as the content of the programmes at the case study university and was a valuable lesson learned during the first academic year.

A key lesson I learned from my practice at the IBC was in relation to replicating and providing equivalence of experience on a full-time course at our campus. Chapter B10 QAA Quality Code Indicator 11, when outlining responsibilities for 'equivalence of academic standards' makes no specific mention of 'equivalence of student experience'. During my work with the Special Interest Group Higher Education Academy this was discussed with a wide cross-section of practitioners and the

general guidance which was included in the final document highlighting the importance of equivalence and the need to timetable delivery during the same semester for all partners, thus allowing the same assessments to be taken by all students studying the same module. Taking the same assessment provides evidence of 'equivalence'; it also allows an analysis of performance to take place across cohorts.

Based on my previous experience [within a part-time programme], cited above, 30 hours face to face class contact with UK tutors worked well. For our full-time three year undergraduate law degree [LLB], the 30 hours was to be delivered as 18 hours at the start of the module [e.g. Semester 1 in September], during which time the tutor would provide an introduction and overview of the module material, while the balance of 12 hours was to be delivered at the end of the module [e.g. Semester 1 in December, with assessments taking place in January]. As such the teaching by flying faculty staff was in two blocks. During the interim, students would attend seminars every two weeks with local tutors. On the full-time course, students would study three modules, with one seminar in one week and two the following week. Seminars took place in twilight time, namely 5.30–7.30. This was due to the fact that local tutors were practicing lawyers and therefore could only deliver classes after their working day in practice was over. It was a conscious decision to employ practicing lawyers as local tutors since their role was not just to go over the seminar material which was the same as the students were taking in Wolverhampton, but also to localise the content to host country law.

Another important consideration is that, unlike international students who come to the UK to study and are therefore part of the UK experience and are therefore able to adapt to the UK style, students who are at the IBC may find it

*'harder to adapt to teaching environment on campus, which is effectively a small 'bubble' of foreign culture that students experience for a few hours each day.'* Healey (2015:3).

This reinforces the importance of being reactive to students' needs in relation to pedagogical issues and is illustrated below in relation to student learning. It also continues the discussion around the students being 'glocal'. Since the students at the IBC were not immersed in British culture, which they would be if they had chosen to study in the UK, it was necessary to provide additional support initially in relation to study skills, since the concept of constructive alignment to learning outcomes was new to them. The induction was prolonged in order to support extra study skills activities and to make clear the pedagogy which would be used. It became apparent that support relating to academic English was important and would have to be provided by the UK HEI. The formal language of the host country was English. However, most students did not use English as their first language and so the maturity of grammar was not always present. This became apparent from feedback from both students and flying faculty in the case study UK HEI, as stated above.

Since the teaching was supported by tutors from the UK HEI 'flying in' to deliver face to face lectures, initially there was a culture shock in terms both of students not being used to the teaching styles of my colleagues, and my colleagues not being used to the teaching environment they were entering. In relation to the teaching environment, each class room had the usual teaching facilities of computers, access to the internet and projectors. However, external factors would sometimes impact on teaching, such as regular power cuts, downage, or limited band speed of wifi, and birds regularly coming in through the windows and happily hopping around. As part of the tutor

induction which took place in the UK, these matters were made clear and tutors soon realised the necessity of Plan B which did not rely on technological support.

Continuous monitoring was used, with the Lessons Learned Log being piloted – a documentary source which allows me to capture data continuously, allowing any issue to be raised at an early stage and therefore hopefully identifying any risks which needed to be mitigated and also opportunities to enhance the student experience. Regular meetings took place with student representatives, local tutors and myself. Additionally all students were encouraged to raise any concerns they may have. These meetings allowed the Lessons Learned Log to be a live document which fed in continually to the Course Journal which was the UK HEI's formal monitoring process. This formed a rich mechanism to collect data in relation to both direct and participant observation which provided immediacy and an insight into both cultural and technical operations. It was important to capture information so that an audit trail could be created. With Chapter B10 being risk-based it was necessary to identify risks at the earliest opportunity, thus allowing resolution to take place with minimum negative impact on the student experience, and fulfilling the requirement of quality assurance. Within my findings I provide examples of how, through the Lessons Learned Log, issues were raised and resolved. It was important to also seek to provide enhancement opportunities if at all possible, thus turning a potential negative into a positive. The importance of the Lessons Learned Log was that it also provided an opportunity to reflect on the activities of the IBC, with the student experience a priority.

However, there were also additional priorities and pressure working with an IBC setting, the key one being that of reputational risk and that if things went wrong it

could potentially affect the standing of all UK HEIs. This was amplified when a decision to close the IBC was made, since this was one of the first campuses to close post introduction of Chapter B10 and since no precedent was available.

Having gained confidence from the mutual support of my community of practice I also sought to gain a more specific insight by reviewing other practitioners' experiences to assist with the opening of an IBC.

Below is a summary of the lessons learned over the first 12 months of delivery, which illustrates the evolution of the delivery of modules on a full-time undergraduate programme at an IBC. This method of learning is supported by Gunn and Frisk (2013:21) acknowledging the importance of pedagogical knowledge gained from the lived experience in the classroom [per O'Mahoney 2014:10)

### 4.2.3 Research Question 2 - Findings Year 1 – Quality Enhancement

The first phase of my findings relates to the March 2012 to July 2013 below:

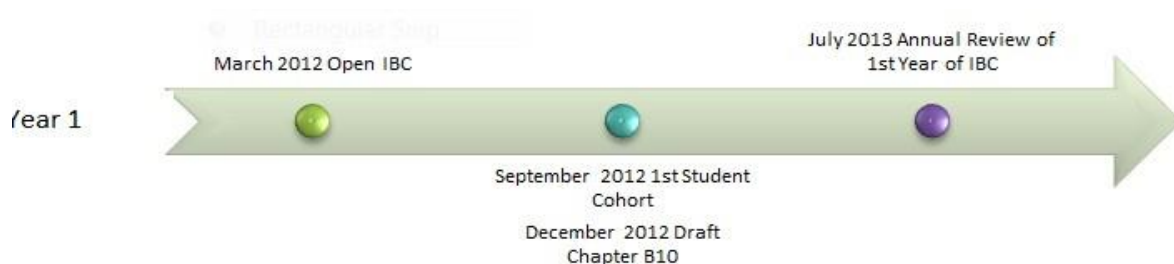


Figure 10 Year 1 case study IBC

The model which was in place for the opening of the IBC, based on previous experience from my own practice, used 30 hours face to face contact, which was the equivalent to that of students at the main UK campus.

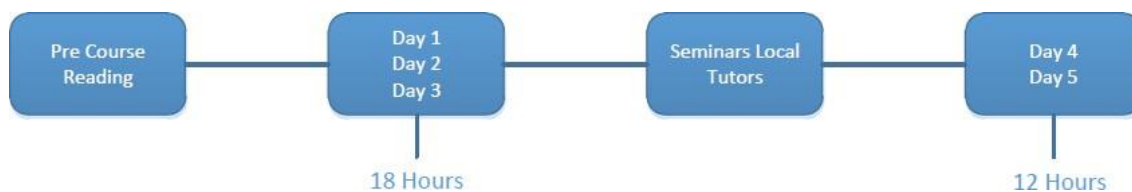


Figure 12 Initial Delivery Model at case study IBC

Since this was a new initiative for the UK HEI it was important to monitor the delivery pattern and get feedback from students. This formed part of the Lessons Learned Log whereby any issues raised were dealt with immediately rather than wait until mid-module evaluation or course committee. It was possible to collect rather than create issues by having a live document in the administration office and students were encouraged to log any problem. They were reminded of this at the Course Committee dated 15<sup>th</sup> February 2013:

*'Students were reminded that if there are any problems encountered these should be raised immediately and not wait until the next course committee.'*

This included inability to access electronic materials, as was further evidenced in an annexe to the minutes of the Faculty Student Council 27<sup>th</sup> November 2013, where 4 students reported that they were not receiving emails and some were having issues accessing electronic resources.

The concept of continuous monitoring has been supported with the introduction of Chapter B10 in which the main expectation is:

*Degree-awarding bodies take ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with organisations other than the degree-awarding body are implemented securely and managed effectively. (2012:11)*

Additionally, Chapter B8, Programme Monitoring and the Expectation states:

*'Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes.'* (2012:7)

Chapter B8 makes reference to '*Continuous engagement and promoting enhancement*' (2012:5). This deals with support for the pilot of the Lessons Learned Log in relation to capturing data in a continuous way and with the Course Journal approach adopted by the UK HEI.

Since the ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities lay with the case study HEI it was important to ensure that processes were in place to monitor the student experience.

The study pattern of two blocks of flying faculty and thereafter only three seminars over a two week period was not popular with the few full-time students on the LLB course. At the Course Committee meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2013 it was confirmed that additional study skills classes would take place and the IT lab would be open for students to use throughout the day.

The majority of students on the LLB were also working, or had career responsibilities, as is the case with students in the UK. However, there were a few students who were not working and had expected more interaction with tutors. This was identified in the Lessons Learned Log **[Appendix C]**.

A fundamental part of this research was to gauge the student performance at the IBC compared to students studying in the UK HEI. Therefore I undertook a comparative analysis for each year in relation to two law programmes offered at both the IBC and the UK HEI. The content of the programmes was the same, with local



contextualisation by the local tutors. The assessments taken by both cohorts were exactly the same. All marking was carried out anonymously by the module teams at the UK HEI.

One of the programmes is a 3 year full-time undergraduate law degree [LLB] and the other is a part-time 2 year postgraduate law programme [LLM Common Professional Qualification – CPE. This is a course aimed at graduates who have no law background who wish to qualify as lawyers]. Both programmes are monitored by the UK Professional, Regulatory Statutory Body.

Performance results, which are data provided centrally by the UK HEI, identified by Yin (2018:114) as archival records that are ‘precise and usually quantitative’ relating to the first cohort who had completed their first year of study show that, compared to their counterparts in the UK, their performance was slightly lower.

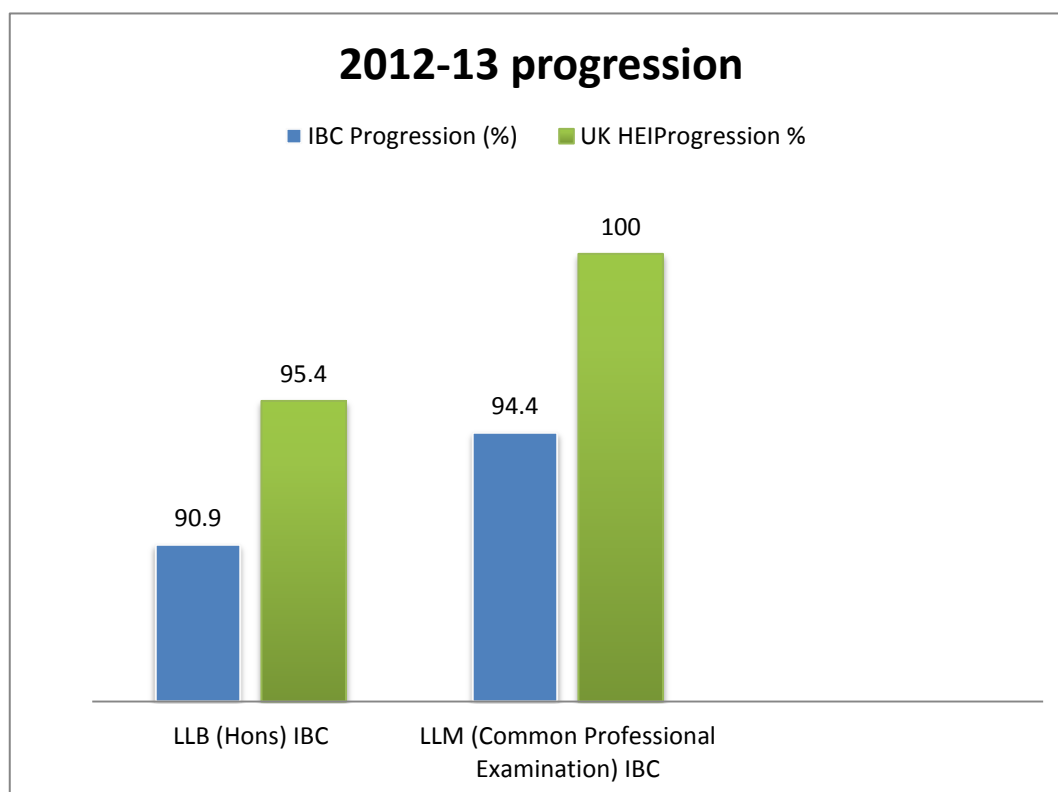


Figure 13 2012-13 Comparative student progression data analysis

This information formed part of the annual review in August 2013 which identified that some improvement could be made by IBC students.

### 4.3 Research Question 1 - Year 2 analysis and findings

The period this analysis covers is September 2013 to July 2014:



Figure 14 Year 2 case study IBC

Consequently the pattern of delivery was reviewed as part of the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Review, and timetabled classes allowing the use of the IT lab were introduced, which alleviated the situation somewhat for those students who were free every day. The use of the IT lab allowed those who were on campus all day to form a study group and prepare and research their seminars together. Conversely, those who were unable to attend these study skills sessions in the IT lab were not overly disadvantaged, but they had to find alternative time to prepare their work.

The next lesson learned related to some students not fully preparing for the seminars and a small number of students dominating the seminars. This issue was raised by the student representatives and I met the local tutors for their views. Since this was potentially a fundamental issue I attended a seminar to see for myself. I did this unannounced to the students, although I had discussed it with the local tutors in advance. This direct observation allowed me to confirm that a number of students did appear to be unprepared and the local tutor had difficulty in coaxing a number of them to put forward their views. The minutes from the first annual review state:

- *Tutorials at 5pm – every other week with local tutors.*
- *Timetabled and told students they had to have an informal seminar to prepare for class with tutor which they have every other week. They had to attend as a group to discuss their answers, they took it in turns to be Chair and write down group answers and decide who would answer each question when with tutor. Their completed answer sheet was then handed to the tutor at the start of the formal seminar. This saved time in class with tutor and allowed tutor to identify if area class did not understand if they got an answer wrong so could spend more time on that question. Not popular since some students did not prepare and just came and wrote down answers. If we had infra structure then a tutor could attend to supervise this process so able to have structure and have group in day with students who are not working'. (31<sup>st</sup> August 2014)*

#### 4.3.1. Research Question 2 – Quality Enhancement

In order to encourage engagement with the seminars a new schedule was introduced whereby students would have seminars every two weeks. However, during the fallow week where they did not have a seminar they were expected to meet informally as a group having previously prepared their answers and then discuss them as a group to agree a group answer and nominate a different person to answer each part of the question [**Appendix C**]. This can be seen as part of the first Annual Review in August 2013 which identifies lessons to be learned after the first year of delivery.

This was an attempt to engage all students and encourage their preparation for seminars. The issue which persisted was that we had a mix of students, some with either employment or carer responsibilities and some who had just left school and wanted to be at university every day. The use of the structured informal seminars worked quite well initially. However, attendance became lower and a request was made to discontinue these classes. This was done when it was agreed with the local tutors that they would deliver additional seminars, namely, one each week rather than every two weeks. In relation to equivalence of experience with students on campus in the UK seminars were two hours in the UK, whereas in the IBC they were

shorter due to a change in the local bus timetable, with the last bus leaving from outside the campus building at 7:30. Consequently, seminars were more realistically one hour and fifteen minutes.

The format for the seminar sheets remained the same and students were expected to complete the answers to the questions and email them to the tutor the day before the seminar. This encouraged students to prepare in advance and also allowed the tutor to identify if any specific area or question had been consistently answered incorrectly so that more time could be spent on these areas.

When reviewing the student performance at the end of the second year of delivery at the IBC some improvements could be seen in relation to the 2 law programmes. The data shows an improvement in performance by the IBC students in the 3 year undergraduate programme whereas performance at the UK HEI remained consistent with the previous year. The change in relation to the postgraduate programme saw comparative performance improvement for IBC students compared to those at the UK HEI. However, percentagewise both groups had a lower performance on the CPE, with IBC student progression dropping from 94.4% to 90.9%, and an even larger shift for the UK HEI students, dropping from 100% to 86.6% compared to the previous year.

## 2013-14 Progression

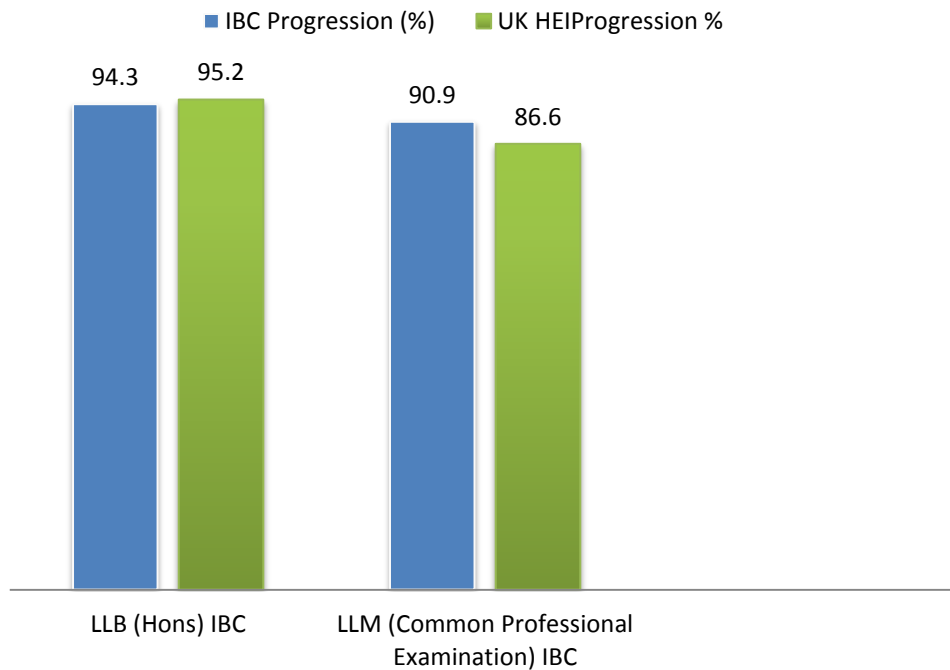


Figure 15 2013-14 Comparative student progression data analysis

### 4.4 Research Question 1 - Year 3 analysis and findings

The period to which this analysis relates is September 2014 to June 2015:

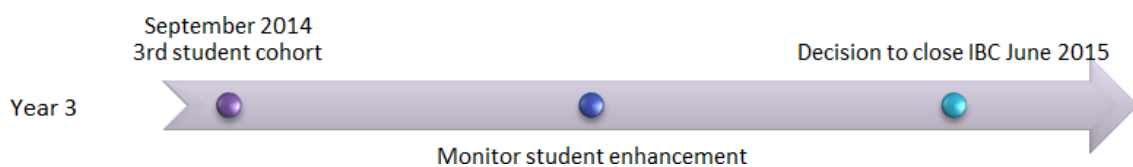


Figure 16 Year 3 case study IBC

Some students on the full-time programme said that preparing for their seminars was more difficult because it had been some time since the introductory lectures. Whilst the feedback was generally excellent, one student at the follow-up from the Faculty Student Forum on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2014 reported:

*'The course dispensed by the UK lecturers at the very start of the semester are too much of a cramming process for immediate understanding and memorisation. The course needs to be spread over a reasonable period of time and not covered in about four days per module.'*

A solution to this evolved when considering capacity building, which adds to the sustainability of the course. The role of the local tutors over the first academic year had evolved becoming more inclusive and expanding from not just providing seminar support and contextualising the material to ensuring that it was 'localised' as well as internationalised. An additional role taken by the local tutor was at the end of seminars. Where these completed a specific topic/subject the local tutor would provide a 15 minute overview of the next topic/subject. This reminded the students of the information they received during the initial 18 hours block delivery from flying faculty and allowed the local tutor to show where the teaching materials were on the VLE and identify key aspects/issues to consider.

Since this was a shift from the usual practice it was important to manage student and tutor expectations. Consequently, formal guidance was provided at the start of Semester 1 2014. Please see [**Appendix D** ].

This therefore allowed the enhanced delivery pattern to be introduced:

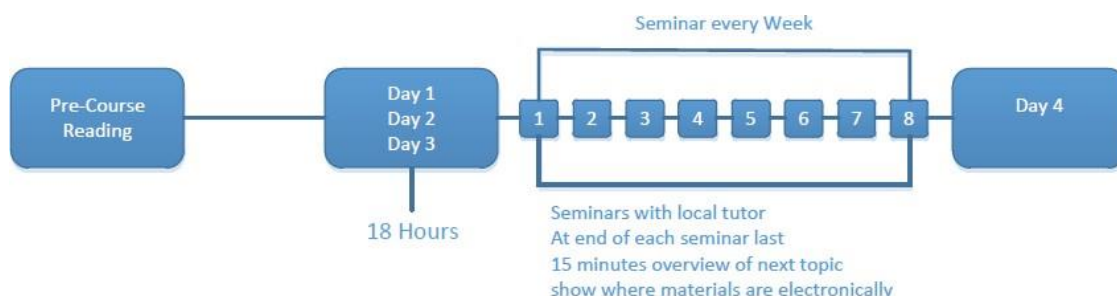


Figure 17 Evolved Delivery Model

This model, which evolved from the first phase in September 2012 when the IBC opened, was preferred by both the students and local tutors and also the module leaders who were able to engage more with the local tutors. The lesson learned from this experience of practice could be identified as not discipline specific. This also confirms Bond's view (2006:3) relating to the 'international dimension' and 'changing what we teach and how we teach it', and that of Rizvi and Lingard (2000:421) who states that the approach to the curriculum and the aspect of globalisation 'seeks to provide students with skills of inquiry and analysis rather than a set of facts about globalisation'. Additionally, Shiel et al. (2005) support the need for seeing the local in global which is achieved with the use of local tutors supporting the flying faculty from the UK.

Rumley and Altbach (2016) discuss this element in terms of 'local and global':  
(2016:10)

*The local and the global 'Asks where and how are practitioners, researchers and policymakers trained for the work they do and to what extent is internationalisation a focus of this training.*

As a practitioner in this environment my response is that we learn from doing and reflecting on our practice and an important part of being 'trained' is sharing our experiences with our community of practice.

The final element of the teaching and learning experience for the students at the IBC was a 12 hour revision session which took place over two days towards the end of the module. This encompassed the final seminar which allowed the module leader to engage with the local tutor in-country and also learn from the 'localisation' of the teaching material which was uploaded on to the VLE, ensuring students who were

studying that specific module could also gain this practical insight and providing an additional ‘international’ perspective from the host country.

The lesson learned relating to the delivery pattern, capacity building of local tutors and ‘localising’ and ‘internationalising the material is supported by the Strategic Plan of Tertiary Education in the host country which clearly states that

*‘if tertiary education is expected to contribute significantly to the building of skills and the intellectual capacity of the country, there are a number of critical challenges that have to be faced, not least of which are an increased and widened access to quality tertiary education of international standards, carrying a degree of relevance such that it becomes more responsive to the needs of the labour market.’*

In this context, the Strategic Goals of Tertiary Education from the host country during the period 2008-2020 have been identified as follows:

1. *Increasing and widening access and ensuring equity*
2. *Enhancing quality and relevance*
3. *Ensuring financial sustainability*
4. *Strengthening sector capability*
5. *Meeting student needs*
6. *Facilitating research for national development*
7. *Enhancing linkages between TEIs and the Economic Sectors*
8. *Creating an effective national knowledge and innovation system*
9. ***Internationalization of host country tertiary education***

Education & Human Resources Strategy Plan 2008-2020 Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources November 2008 [15] [Emphasis by this writer].

The opening of the IBC widened access to education, since students were able to access a UK degree without the expense and inconvenience of having to travel to the UK. From the experience of the student cohort at the case study HEI IBC, many students would not have been financially able to attend the UK to study and some had caring responsibilities thus limiting flexibility in choice of location for study. Thus equality and widened access to education was provided.



Additionally, Smith (2017), with her TNE Toolkit, provided helpful guidance as to what can and cannot be changed without recourse to internal quality systems and the above falls into the category of areas which can be changed due to their indicative rather than prescribed module content, this is clearly shown in Appendix A of the 2017 work of Smith.

#### 4.4.1. Research Question 2 – Quality Enhancement

When comparing the student performance for the third year of delivery after the changes detailed above had been introduced there was an improvement in IBC student performance in both the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Encouraging students to prepare for seminars by expecting them to send their answers to the local tutors in advance also improved their assessment technique which seems to have added to their overall improvement.

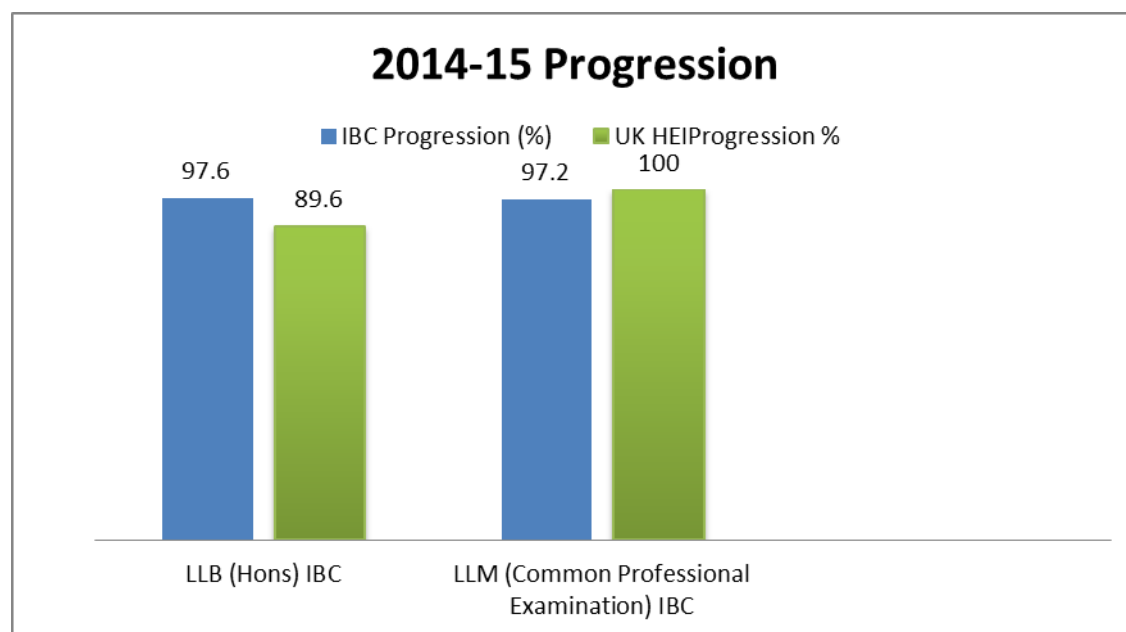


Figure 18. 2014-15 Comparative student progression data analysis

There was a 6.7% improvement in progression in the undergraduate programme at the IBC from the initial opening of the IBC to when the enhancement changes were in place. There was also improvement in progression in the postgraduate programme, with a 2.8% improvement in progression which increased to 97.2%.

Once a decision had been made to close the campus, announced in December 2015, further enhancements were made. These are discussed in more detail in the section below. They focussed on carefully monitoring attendance and ensuring all students were aware of their assessment opportunities to complete their studies.

The final year of comparative data is most pleasing as it suggests that the enhancements which evolved from the opening of the IBC to its subsequent closure added to the students' ability to progress and complete their studies.

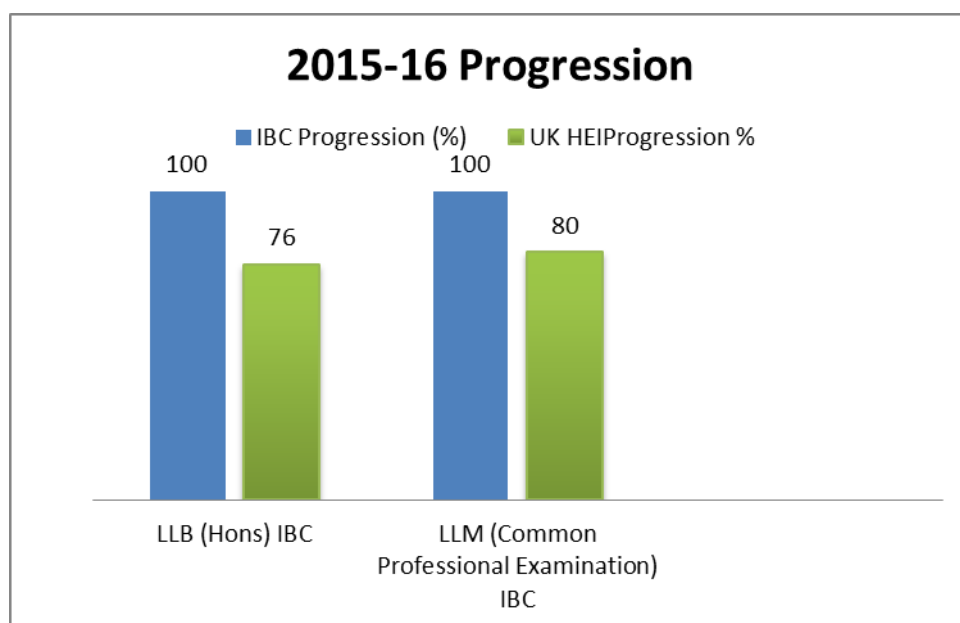


Figure 19. 2015-16 Comparative student progression data analysis

This final year data illustrates that valuable lessons have been learned and that student performance had improved at the IBC, compared to the UK HEI, as can be seen below.

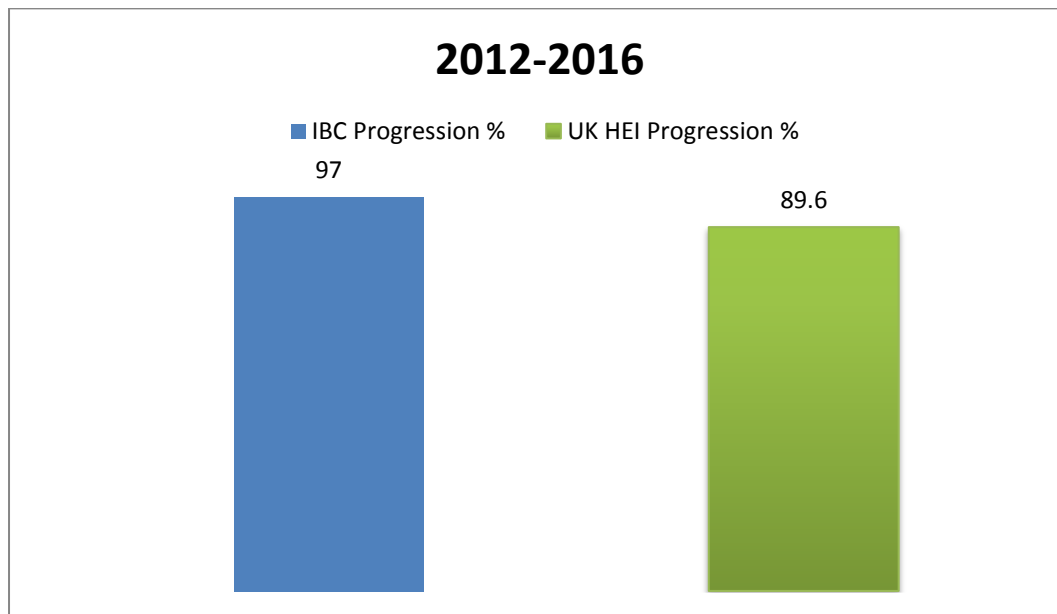


Figure 20. 2012-2016 Comparative student progression data analysis

When considering the overall progression at the IBC compared to the UK HEI there is a trend of improvement at the IBC which could be aligned to the changes which took place in relation to quality enhancement.

Quality enhancement should be key driver to ensure that the student experience is appropriate. The Quality Framework provides a catalyst for this, ensuring that within the IBC setting, HEIs understand that their students are not the same as the international students we teach on the UK campus. They do not have the advantage of being immersed in British culture which will improve their English language skills or of familiarity with the pedagogical framework used, Healey (2013). This has also been my experience in my own practice and provided an important insight concerning students at an IBC.

Consequently, it is the responsibility of the UK HEI to add this dimension, so as not to disadvantage the students, ensuring English language support is available and

ideally written into the programmes rather than being 'add ons' which place further pressure on the student body.

It should be possible to learn quickly if things are going wrong, or are not as expected. The method used in this case study example was the use of a Lessons Learned Log which then fed into the Course Journal, which offered continuous monitoring rather than annual monitoring. This also ensured rigour was associated with the data collections.

Students expressed a desire to see the 'brand' of the UK HEI present at the IBC. This was raised by LLB students at the Course Committee. A representative said they would like to be able to feel more a part of the university, for example a small shop selling merchandise was welcomed with the use of branded materials such as bags and even a lanyard which allowed the student body to have an identity linked to the UK HEI. This was also highlighted in the student feedback questionnaire which asked students '*What do you expect a Branch Campus to be like? Are there any key features that should be present?*' Thirty-five% said that the current experience was below what they had expected. I followed this up with interviews with the student representatives and it was possible to identify mechanisms to provide students with a welcome pack which included some branded items.

#### **4.5 Research Question 2 - Year 4 closure of the IBC Quality Enhancement**

The part of my study which I have found most interesting is that relating to the closure of the IBC. The period of time this covers is September 2015 to August 2016:



Figure 21. Year 4 case study IBC

The decision to close was made in June 2015 yet was not communicated and confirmed to the students or external stakeholders until December 2015. The timing of the decision to close was very important and allowed a judgement to be made not to have a new intake in September 2015. This was very helpful and ensured that a minimum number of students would be left without the opportunity to complete their studies at the campus.

#### 4.5.1 Time line IBC law students

The IBC opened and had its first intake of students in September 2012. The following courses were offered:

LLB – Year 1 – 3 year course  
LLM – Year 1 – 2 year course  
LLM CPE – Year 1 – 2 year course

| September 2012                                       | September 2013 | September 2014 | September 2015 | September 2016 |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>LLB</b>   |                |                |                |                |
| Cohort 1   | Year 1         |                |                |                |
|  |                | Year 2         |                |                |
|  |                |                | Year 3         |                |
| Cohort 2   |                | Year 1         |                |                |
|  |                |                | Year 2         |                |
|  |                |                |                | Year 3         |
| 2016/17 – Year 3 – see options available in Findings |                |                |                |                |
| <b>LLM ICFL</b>                                      |                |                |                |                |

|          |        |        |        |  |
|----------|--------|--------|--------|--|
| Cohort 1 | Year 1 |        |        |  |
|          |        | Year 2 |        |  |
| Cohort 2 |        | Year 1 |        |  |
|          |        |        | Year 2 |  |
| LLM CPE  |        |        |        |  |
| Cohort 1 | Year 1 |        |        |  |
|          |        | Year 2 |        |  |
| Cohort 2 |        | Year 1 |        |  |
|          |        |        | Year 2 |  |

Table 16 Student admission and progression 2012- 2016

Since there was no new intake in September 2015 the only cohort of students who could not complete their studies at the IBC were those who began their second year of the LLB course, which is a 3 year course, in September 2015. All other students could potentially complete. The exit strategy required to ensure compliance with Chapter 10 is discussed in the Findings Chapter.

The final year of the IBC had to provide a clear audit trail to ensure compliance with Chapter B10. Consequently, additional activities were necessary to ensure that all students were aware of individual requirements to complete their studies. It was also necessary for the UK Higher Education Institution to audit certain events, ensuring that the process was transparent. (Please see **Appendix E** Table 17). It was crucial to provide a clear audit trail which cross referenced all key documentation and also the primary source of specific regulatory criteria which was being implemented. Whilst an audit trail was important to show compliance with quality assurance a key driver was in relation to student welfare and to ensure that the student experience continued to be as high quality as possible. Identification of quality enhancement opportunities remained an important part of the process and relationship with the students.

Due to the potential reputation risk involved in both operating and now closing an

IBC, decision-making was more cautious and measured. Quality assurance as a mechanism to ensure compliance was always the starting point to any potential changes. Quality enhancement was only possible if it would continue to fulfil quality assurance. Over the period of operation of the IBC, robust quality processes were in place and due to the uniqueness of the setting, rigorous reflection was required to ensure that students were not disadvantaged by making the decision to study at our IBC rather than our main campus in the UK. The following sections illustrate how comparisons may be made to show that the student experience at our IBC was enhanced and how the Chapter B10 framework ensured that all decisions made reduced the risks as well as ensuring that initial quality was always maintained and where possible enhanced.

Enhancement was important to ensure students were not disadvantaged and that their welfare was the motivation for decisions made.

#### 4.6 Closing the IBC – lessons I learnt implementing Chapter B10

The period to which this analysis relates is September 2015 to August 2016:



Figure 21 Year 4 case study IBC

I identified a gap in information available in relation to how to close an IBC, based on the QAA Quality Framework. I intend to share this with my community of practice, providing new knowledge and unique insight as the first UK HEI to close post the introduction of Chapter B10. I had hoped that the QAA Quality Framework would

provide some guidance and assist in closing an IBC.

The role of the UK QAA is to

*‘...safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK higher education wherever it is delivered around the world. We check that students get the higher education they are entitled to expect’* <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/>

The UK Quality Code is the definitive reference point for standards and quality in UK Higher Education. The Code is in three sections. Section A relates to ‘Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards’; Section B relates to ‘Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality’; and Section C relates to ‘Information about Higher Education’

[[http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf?sfvrsn=170af781_14)

[frameworks.pdf?sfvrsn=170af781\\_14](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf?sfvrsn=170af781_14) page 3]. The Code was introduced in consultation with UK HEIs and explains the importance of ‘public confidence’ in the quality of UK HEIs’ provision. The Code is currently under review in 2018. However, the Code which was in place during the case study example of the closure of the IBC was introduced on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014 and covers the period of closure for this case study example, namely 2016.

As such it was imperative that the Code was followed. Since this was the first IBC run by a UK HEI to close I looked to find lessons I could learn from others, as I did when the IBC was opened. However, because this was the first UK HEI to close post introduction of the Quality Code, no direct information was available. Hence the gap in knowledge which this case study example can fill.

The main expectation from the code specifically relating to ‘Managing Higher Education Provision with others’ clearly states:

*‘Degree-awarding bodies take **ultimate responsibility** for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with organisations other than the degree-awarding*



*body are implemented securely and managed effectively.'*

Therefore the case study HEI has ultimate responsibility for the academic standards and quality of learning opportunities. This had been the case during the validation and delivery at the IBC and would remain so during the closure process.

The way in which this expectation should be achieved is through the implementation of 19 indicators. Those relating to the closure of the IBC are discussed below.

### **Indicator 5**

*'The risks of each arrangement to deliver learning opportunities with others are assessed at the outset and reviewed subsequently on a periodic basis. Appropriate and proportionate safeguards to manage the risks of the various arrangements are determined and put in place.'*

A periodic review took place in relation to the delivery of the courses delivered at the IBC. Since this was a new venture and potentially high risk, especially in relation to the reputation of the case study HEI [UK HE International Unit (2013:54)], and all UK HEIs, this view is supported by key writers such as Mellors-Bourne, whose 2017 work reviews why students chose to study a TNE course. A key motivation is the quality of a UK degree, which added to their employability

[\[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/.../CRAC\\_TNE\\_report\\_final.pdf\]](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/.../CRAC_TNE_report_final.pdf)

There is therefore a clear obligation on all UK HEIs engaging in TNE to maintain the high reputation relating to quality provision. Grant (2013) confirms the 'need to manage reputational risk should a venture fail or disappoint expectations'. This is further considered by Healey (2013) who confirmed that IBCs reduced the risk of reputational risk as discussed previously.

Consequently, a pilot took place at the case study IBC, ensuring that an ongoing review took place in the form of a Lessons Learned Log, rather than having a review

at the end of each semester and then producing a periodic review. This supports the underlying theme of Chapter B10 which relates to quality assurance and quality enhancement. The emphasis of the Lessons Learned Log allows enhancement to be the key driver to ensure that the student experience is the focus and that processes are reactive as well as proactive. This also supported the shift to a risk-based approach by the QAA and the introduction of the Quality Code, more specifically that of Chapter B10 which identifies 'Risks presented by other organisations' and states:

*'Degree awarding bodies ensure that adequate contingency plans are in place against the possibility that a delivery organisation becomes insolvent, ceases trading, or an agreement is terminated for some other reason and it has to assume responsibility for teaching out a programme (see Indicator 9).'*

[http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/chapter-b10\\_-\\_managing-higher-education-provision-with-others.pdf?sfvrsn=8c02f781\\_8](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/chapter-b10_-_managing-higher-education-provision-with-others.pdf?sfvrsn=8c02f781_8) page 18

This clearly states that it is a responsibility of the UK HEI to 'teach out a programme'.

In this case study example there was no need 'to assume responsibility' since the mode of delivery was that of flying faculty and as such there was no delegation to a partner, as would have been the case if it was a supported delivery model whereby partner staff delivered the programme. A detailed 'teach out plan' was formulated, and this is illustrated later.

This also supports the lessons learned from the previous literature in this area using other case study examples [Enderlein 2010]. Teaching out was an option provided at George Mason University and the University of Southern Queensland. '

*'Teach out is when a provider has decided to phase out a course that still has students enrolled. The course continues to be accredited but no new students can be enrolled, and arrangements are in place to ensure all existing students can either complete the course of study, or transition to a mutually agreed course at no disadvantage.'*

Australia Quality Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

<https://www.teqsa.gov.au/withdrawing-courseteachout>

Consequently, when considering the range of options which could be offered to students as a result of the closure of the IBC, teach out clearly is an option which must be considered. This informed decision commenced the implementation of a detailed audit relating to each student, ensuring that individual exit routes were identified for each student at the IBC which then allowed individual teach out plans to be confirmed. When considering teach out there appeared to be two alternatives which would fulfil the definition, namely, teaching out at the UK HEI's campus in the UK or teaching out via distance or supported learning. The distance learning option would only be available if a variant of the existing programme was already validated as distance learning. Otherwise the need to develop a new distance learning variant would be time prohibitive, especially if there was Professional Regulatory Statutory Body involvement. The case study university had a validated and live distance learning variant for all of the law programmes offered at the IBC in the host country. This facilitated ability and responsibility to support those students who were unable to complete their study due to the closure of the IBC and those who were required to resit/retake specific modules within their programme of study.

The decision to close the IBC was confirmed by the Vice Chancellor:

*This is a decision that has not been made lightly. The university has informed the MEC, and the British High Commission of its decision and the plans to support existing students during this transition phase until the campus closes and students complete their degrees.*

Express & Star [16/12/15]

The key indicator which provides the framework in which the ‘expectation’ is that the UK HEI retains ‘ultimate responsibility’, especially when, as in the example of this case study, the IBC closes, is Indicator 9:

### **Indicator 9**

*‘Degree-awarding bodies retain responsibility for ensuring that students admitted to a programme who wish to complete it under their awarding authority can do so in the event that a delivery organisation or support provider or partner withdraws from an arrangement or that the degree-awarding body decides to terminate an arrangement.’*

This section further states:

*‘When degree-awarding bodies enter into an arrangement for a programme of study to be delivered with others, or agree an articulation arrangement leading to one of their awards, they make clear to prospective students which body will make the academic award. Degree-awarding bodies therefore have an obligation to students admitted to programmes under their awarding authority.’*

[http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/chapter-b10\\_-\\_managing-higher-education-provision-with-others.pdf?sfvrsn=8c02f781\\_8](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/chapter-b10_-_managing-higher-education-provision-with-others.pdf?sfvrsn=8c02f781_8) page 25

This clearly confirms that there is an ‘obligation’ to students. Student welfare and support remains to be a fundamental right of all students and opportunities to improve their experience even during closure were paramount in the decision making process.

Within the Code there are 19 indicators which provide guidance as to how the ‘expectation’ will be met. Fourteen of the indicators have an additional section headed ‘Further guidance, reference and resources’. This is not the case with Indicator 9.

The contractual agreement between the case study HEI and the partner in the host country [which was drafted prior to the implementation of the QAA Code] also makes clear that the University retains an ‘obligation’ to the students should the partnership

be terminated, namely:

*'A termination implementation plan should be agreed by each institution's academic representatives setting out:*

- i) Whether students will be affected by the termination (and how many and at what stage in their course)*
- ii) How students will be protected from any adverse effects of the termination, for example will students be transferred to another course or supported in continuing their studies through distance learning or some other means.'*

QAA Code Indicator 9 also states:

*'A range of solutions may be possible for teaching out the programme. Only in exceptional cases, and with the express agreement of the students involved, is the awarding authority transferred to a third party degree-awarding body.'*

As will be discussed later, this was Option 2 available to students in this case study example, which provided students with an opportunity to continue their studies in the host country using an alternative UK HEI.

Further guidance is provided by Chapter B10 confirming the responsibility of the case study university. The decision to transfer to an alternative UK HEI in country was only possible with the consent of each student. Hence each student was asked to sign a declaration confirming acceptance of transfer to a third party.

## **Indicator 11, Chapter B10 QAA**

### **'Indicator 11**

*Degree-awarding bodies are responsible for the academic standards of all credit and qualifications granted in their name. This responsibility is never delegated. Therefore, degree-awarding bodies ensure that the standards of any of their awards involving learning opportunities delivered by others are equivalent to the standards set for other awards that they confer at the same level. They are also consistent with UK national requirements.'*

[http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/chapter-b10\\_-managing-higher-education-provision-with-others.pdf?sfvrsn=8c02f781\\_8](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/chapter-b10_-managing-higher-education-provision-with-others.pdf?sfvrsn=8c02f781_8)

#### **4.6.1 Options considered to allow students to complete their degree/ studies in the host country**

A decision was made by the case study HEI to close its IBC, which had opened in March 2012, with the first cohort of students being admitted in September 2012. The decision to close the campus was made in June 2015 [press release Express & Star published 16<sup>th</sup> December 2015]. The reasons for the closure are not part of this study, rather this study will illustrate the implementation of Indicator 9 of the quality code.

Once a decision had been made to close the IBC a chain of events took place which included:

Setting up an IBC Working Group, with representatives from the Office of the Vice Chancellor and operational managers, to plan and implement the disengagement. Key stakeholders were identified as being the British High Commission, TEC and QAA, all of whom would be notified of the impending press release in advance of publication. Additionally, students would be informed face to face and in writing by the University Registrar, again prior to the formal press release.

All IBC students were informed of the closure of the IBC by the case study HEI Registrar. Meetings took place on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> December 2015. Students were seen in two cohorts, namely those who should be completing their studies by the end of that academic year, LLB Level 6, LLM ICFL and LLM CPE students, and those who could not complete their studies, LLB Level 5 and any remaining Level 4 students who had deferred or mitigated their studies. A copy of the press release was also provided to

the students and the release was not made public until after they had been informed. Each student was also given a letter confirming what had been discussed.

The majority of students, over 90%, should have been able to complete and exit their studies with an award, as can be seen in the timeline diagram in the previous chapter.

Therefore once the decision had been made to close, the September 2014 intake became the last intake, with formal notice of closure provided in December 2015. The number of students enrolled at the IBC was implied as the reason for closure by Wilkins (2016:178) who said the case study HEI 'would close its campus in the host country because four years after opening it still had only 140 students', citing the Times Higher Education 2015 article by Morgan. The reason the number was low related to the non-recruitment in 2015. By this stage in 2014/15 there were 96 applications for law and as such the overall number would have increased quite considerably. However, since the decision to close had been made no admissions were possible. Wilkins' implication was incorrect; numbers were not the reason for the closure.

Only a small number of students were unable to exit their award during the life of the IBC and this only related to the LLB Level 5 students since, with the closure of the IBC in September 2016, they did not have an opportunity to complete their final year of study. The LLB was also offered in the host country by other UK HEIs.

The LLM ICFL and LLM CPE were not offered in the host country by any other UK HEI. This was considered prior to the announcement to close the campus and so the notice was released in December 2015 and a decision was made not to recruit any further students following the intake in September 2015. Therefore the last intake

was September 2015 and since the LLM courses were part-time, 2 year courses teaching continued until July 2016 hence their period of study would be completed. However, in order to offer an exit route to those students who had not completed their studies at the first attempt or who had mitigated or deferred their studies or wanted an opportunity for resit / retake, appropriate support through our VLE was made available.

A meeting took place at MES to confirm that assessment opportunities would continue, with their support, for any outstanding examinations. Assessments which were by assignment would be uploaded electronically by individual students through the case study HEI's VLE.

Discussions took place with the 2 other UK HEIs who were then offering the LLB at Level 6 in the host country. Once mapping had taken place, the best fit was UK HEI 'A' rather than UK HEI 'B'. Consequently, a formal request was made to manage the transfer of any students who were currently on the second year of their LLB and therefore needed to complete their third and final year of study. A formal contract was signed confirming this arrangement and UK HEI 'A' representatives were invited to meet all second year LLB students. A presentation took place on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

Students had been informed of an option to complete their studies in country in January 2016 although the specific UK HEI was not named at this stage until a formal contract with the UK HEI had been signed.

In January 2016, each student who was currently registered was invited to attend a one to one meeting with the Academic Director and the Project Manager. It was felt appropriate that two members of staff were present. This was partly to support the audit trail which was required as part of the exit plan and also it allowed students to



ask any questions and have a case study HEI staff member present to take notes and confirm the position of each individual. Each student was shown their individual profile and a clear exit route was identified confirming which assessments were due to be taken at the end of Semester 2, in May, with any resits required in July. This provided an opportunity to ensure that the data we held was accurate since students could raise any issues relating to their results at this stage.

Each student was written to and an email sent to their case study HEI email account and they were requested to attend an individual meeting where their profile was confirmed in relation to how many credits they had achieved and how many were still required and their individual exit plan was discussed confirming their module and assessment diet. The meetings took place in January 2016, after their Semester 1 assessments, clearly setting out the two options available, namely to transfer for their final year of study to the case study HEI distance learning LLB, with a fee waiver, or to transfer to another UK HEI in the host country to complete the final year. This supports the Vice Chancellor of the case study university's statement in the press release announcing the closure that:

*"The decision to end teaching will follow UK (QAA) and ... (TEC) quality assurance procedures and continuing students will be provided with options that will not disadvantage them financially or academically."*

Students were asked to give an initial decision at the meeting and were then given until 5<sup>th</sup> February 2016 to confirm which option they wish to pursue. Students were also reminded of the academic regulations that 120 credits were required to transfer at any level. If students had not completed a level of study the only option was to continue on the case study HEI distance learning degree to complete that level of study and then progress to the next level. This is a requirement of the Professional Regulatory Statutory Body in order for students to have a Qualifying Law Degree,

which is essential should they wish to qualify professionally as a solicitor or barrister [Rule 2:6:3 [www.sra.org.uk/documents/students/academic.../guidance-on-completing-ast-2011.pdf](http://www.sra.org.uk/documents/students/academic.../guidance-on-completing-ast-2011.pdf)]

A third option of transferring to the UK to complete their studies was requested by a small number of students. This was not a 'formal' option since, when discussions took place with TEC, it was felt that this was not appropriate as there were options to continue their studies in the host country. Additionally, TEC suggested that if this were an option then all costs should be borne by the case study HEI, including accommodation, flights and fees.

It transpired that due to visa applications being lengthy, only one student transferred to complete studies at the case study HEI in the UK. This student had a fee waiver in that the only fees charged were what they would have paid if the IBC had remained open, so that they were not disadvantaged. The other students who had raised a desire to transfer to the UK transferred on to our Distance Learning LLB and joined the study group due to the visa process not being completed in time.

Attendance was very carefully monitored, especially for the final semester, and students who did not attend were written to and reminded of the importance of this final semester to their studies.

Revision support was provided in April to support the May 2016, Semester 2 assessments across all three law courses. With Revision Week commencing on 25<sup>th</sup> April, seminars finished on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2016 for all courses.

Revision was to be based on a mix of blended learning materials, available for all modules, and an uploaded revision lecture by the module leader at the UK HEI. For

subjects with assignments, students had been given the opportunity to submit work and receive individual feedback from the module team at the case study HEI. This opportunity was also made available to the students studying at the UK HEI to ensure there was no disadvantage to a parallel cohort of students. Additionally, a VLE topic had been set up which allowed students to upload their work [w/c 18<sup>th</sup> April]. Students would then attend a one to one meeting with myself, or a colleague to go through their turnitin report. Dissertation students, who were generally on the LLM CPE or LLM ICFL were also able to upload their work through turnitin and attend a one to one meeting where it was then possible to identify any referencing issues. A revision class on referencing took place to provide insight and support to seek to minimise academic misconduct issues.

Support was provided [as outlined in the previous chapter] as was reassurance to students who were preparing to take their final assessments at the IBC. Student attendance was good during this period and feedback provided at the time confirmed that students did not feel 'abandoned' and were appropriately prepared for their assessment, whether it be an assignment, dissertation or examination.

Prior to the visit, a meeting took place between the Dean and Associate Dean of Faculty and Head of Academic Law of the case study HEI on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2016 to identify the necessary actions required to ensure that the Semester 2 revision went as smoothly as possible. This ensured that the appropriate revision lectures were recorded and uploaded on to the VLE.

#### **4.6.2 Final assessments July 2016**

All resit or retake students were informed after the assessment boards in June if they needed to take assessments in July 2016. The dates of the resit assessments which

took place in July, in tandem with the academic calendar at case study HEI, were given to the students during their one to one meetings in January 2016, ensuring all students were aware of these important dates well in advance. These assessments were also for students who mitigated or deferred their assessments. Students who failed an assessment at the end of Semester 1, in January 2016, were informed of the need for them to attend assessments in July during meetings which took place in April 2016. Revision materials were available for all assessments in July 2016. Individual feedback was available for all resit students, as was the case for students in the case study HEI in the UK.

#### **4.6.3 Premises**

Since the premises used from 2012 were those of our partner, alternative premises were required from September 2015 for the final academic year. TEC approval is required for any premises which deliver tertiary education in the host country. Consequently, a number of alternative venues were identified and TEC approval was given for delivery at an alternative centre for the final academic year. These premises were also approved by the case study UK HEI quality department and the Professional Regulatory Statutory Body was informed of the change of venue. Since notice to close the IBC was formally served on TEC it was not possible to keep any premises after the end of the academic year 2015/16 since the case study HEI was no longer a 'Registered private Tertiary Education provider in the host country' and it was not possible to provide a base for those students who had transferred to our distance learning degree to complete their studies.

#### 4.6.4 Study group

Those students who were unable to complete their studies at the IBC and who chose to transfer to the distance learning course were encouraged to be part of the study group for each module they were taking and the appropriate text books from the case study HEI library in the host country were given to the students in July 2016 to aid their seminar preparation and revision [which took place online]. A communication chart was prepared, once all students agreed to share this information, showing all the contact details of the students so that they could freely communicate with one another and a schedule was drafted showing meetings which would take place at the students' homes. Attendance at the study group was encouraged, but not compulsory. Additionally, a forum was available on the VLE to allow students in the host country to interact as a group and also with the other distance learning students taking the same modules.

Since there was nothing previously written on this area and the case study UK HEI was one of the first to close an IBC post Chapter B10, it was helpful to have the clear guidance provided by the Indicators of the Quality Framework. Since Section B relates to 'assuring and enhancing academic quality' it supported the closure of the IBC. It was important to provide an audit trail of events illustrating how risks were identified and managed during this process. This was especially important due to the analysis used in this study which is a narrative, interpretative approach.

## 4.7 Summary

The process used in this study allowed me to gather data using a wide cross section of sources, thus avoiding the weakness of case study research identified earlier.

Using the guidance from Yin (2018) this study used 5 sources to gather data namely:

| Sources of evidence used when carrying out case study research   | Documentation | Archival Records | Interviews | Direct Observations | Participant Observations |
|--|---------------|------------------|------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Research Questions   |               |                  |            |                     |                          |
| 1.What lessons may be learned from opening, managing and closing an IBC?                               | ✓             |                  | ✓          | ✓                   | ✓                        |
| 2.How does the shift to continuous monitoring assist in identifying quality enhancement opportunities? | ✓             | ✓                | ✓          |                     | ✓                        |

Having gathered the data it was necessary to implement a clear analytical process when reviewing the data to ensure rigor. Whilst considering my data analysis it was important to review the guidance provided through the lessons learned log since this was a key continuous monitoring tool. I was able to manage the data which then provided the opportunity to carry out qualitative data analysis. Cousin (2009:147) provides guidance in relation to data analysis by asking key questions to support analysis,

1. to 'see if there are any clear themes emerging?'. The key themes which have emerged from the lessons learned log, and other data sources, include the

evolving pedagogy allowing greater student and local tutor involvement. The debate around the content of the curriculum was helpful and provided a clear starting point to ensure that the content was academically equivalent and relevant to the student cohort at the IBC. The capacity building of the local tutors and their increasing influence in the delivery pattern and content developed year on year. In relation to the closure of the IBC it was possible to identify the importance of identifying enhancement opportunities, the motivation being the student experience rather than mere compliance with the Quality Code. Students at the IBC were students of the UK HEI as such their welfare was paramount during the closure. It was important to support them and ensure that their performance was not detrimentally affected hence the need to also support those who were unable to complete their studies due to the closure. Sustainability is important if international developments are to succeed, this will be supported by increasing student numbers as the reputation of the courses offered is improved by making them relevant to the jurisdiction and by providing an international exposure. Capacity building of local tutors is important to build a longer working relationship.

2. Secondly, the '*claims in the way of fuzzy, petite or grand generalisation?*' this formed an important part of my conclusions, although my current experiences relate to and IBC they could be equally relatable to TNE generally. The lessons learned from this practice are now used with all our TNE partners, such as the introduction of a Welcome Pack and the importance of continuous monitoring.

3. , '*can you offer chunks of data to underpin your interpretations?*' the quantitative data which has been used relates to student progression to

ensure that the decisions/solutions which I have made do not adversely affect student performance. By monitoring student progression data it was possible to reflect on the changes made to ensure that not only was the student experience improved but also the performance. Due to the mechanism piloted in this study of the Lessons Learned Log it was possible to identify issues as soon as they arose, thus making resolution easier. The data was created by the students and tutors I had no influence on what was captured. My interpretation of the data was based on an interpretive approach of qualitative data, since the attitude of all of the stakeholders was to seek to identify 'even better if....' This engaged all parties in a positive manner.

4 *'are there any evocative vignettes to write from observations?'* this further supports the view of Geertz, (1973) who confirms that case study researchers often rely on the notion of thick description. Using an interpretative approach this study seeks to provide an insight which according to Cousin (2009:148) *'...the reader needs to feel that they could be there so that they can share in the interpretation with you'*. Case study research should provide rich understandings with the aim to describe, interpret and persuade the reader Cousin (2009). I trust that this study provides an insight and illustrates the importance of using the QAA Quality Code through the vehicle of a Lessons Learned Log to identify enhancement opportunities as well as capturing areas for improvement, which have been identified through the quality assurance processes for example the qualitative data for student progression in the first year of the IBC identified that student progression was lower than that of their parallel cohort based in the UK . Using the 'what went well, even better if...' approach provides a platform to collect data through continuous monitoring providing the HEI with the opportunity to either rectify issues or introduce




enhancement opportunities for the current student cohort rather than wait until the following cohort.

The lessons learned log, through participant observations, allows me to capture rather than create data. My role was to understand and translate (Stake 1995) which is supported by my interpretative paradigm and coherent with my personal position as an insider practitioner.

My final check to ensure rigour in my interpretation of this case study [see 3.13.5 Criteria for interpreting the findings] is to consider the hybrid framework which I have developed based upon the work of Yin and Stake namely:

| Tests                     | Case study tactics                | Examples relating to this case Study  |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Construct validity (Yin)  | Use multiple sources of Evidence  | See table above which confirms multiple sources of evidence   |
| External validity (Yin)   | Use theory in single case studies | I will be using the 'longitudinal' single case study approach with a holistic view of the case study.   |
| Internal validity (Stake) | Triangulate data sources          | I will use a variety of data sources to triangulate my findings. With both qualitative and quantitative data  |
| Reliability (Stake)       | Experiential knowledge            | I will seek to record what happens rather than try and influence it. My role will be to identify solutions to issues raised. By using a Lessons Learned Log I am able to capture information continually. |

My goal was to understand the position I was in at the IBC by using the framework identified above relating to data collection; data analysis and data interpretation this has been achieved by answering my two research questions. After considering lessons learned from my fellow practitioners and my own practice I was then able to add quality enhancement opportunities through continuous monitoring and gathering feedback based on 'what went well, even better if...' approach.



Since the Quality Framework is risk-based it is important to provide a transparent audit trail in relation to actions taken during the closure process. Consequently, detailed records are needed of dates of meetings, copies of emails, copies of letters, and signed copies of letters from students confirming their choice for completion of their studies. It is necessary to prove compliance with the key indicators under Chapter B10, which will allow an HEI to support the quality assurance aspect of the Quality Framework

One should also consider the opportunity to provide quality enhancement opportunities, which may not at first glance be at the forefront of an HEI's strategy. The quality enhancement examples from the case study IBC include the support of the alumni, who attended the final graduation ceremony in country and recent graduates were encouraged to join – the Alumni Association Chapter is still active today. This still provides students with networking opportunities in country and also links with the home UK HEI.

Additionally, when a decision to close was made and because part of the 'teach out plan' was to transfer to the UK HEI, distance learning student support was provided prior to the actual closure. A study group was formed whereby the remaining students were all aware of each other, exchanged contacted details and were given a draft of a study plan encouraging them to meet and discuss the seminar questions as a group. This provided support from their peers and encouraged preparation.

Finally, the text books relating to the remaining modules to be studied were given to the study group when the library at the IBC closed, again providing additional support to the remaining students.

## Chapter 5 Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1 Introduction

The introduction in January 2014 of the Quality Framework, and more specifically Chapter B10, by the UK QAA changed the emphasis of how to manage higher education provision with others. Introduction of this framework may have been prompted by the UK being identified by Illieva (2011) as scoring only 8.3 out of 10 in the ranking of the strength of quality assurance, putting it in only third place behind Australia and Germany. During the consultation period prior to the introduction, HEFCE identified the need to '*Encourage the sharing of good practice and continuous improvement*' McLaughlin (2013). This has provided me with an insight into this developing area and prompted me to share my experiences with others.

Two fundamental shifts have taken place with the introduction of the Quality Framework. First is the shift to a 'risk-based' based approach, with the need to be able to identify risks as early as possible, facilitating the ability to then assess and manage the risk. Second is the importance of quality enhancement rather than merely focusing on quality assurance. Therefore the validation of my research questions show a direct causal link between the need to learn from others and the importance of Chapter B10 with the shift to a 'risk-based' approach and quality enhancement. By using a case study example I have sought to add to the knowledge relating to IBCs and provide a unique insight into closing an IBC after the introduction of Chapter B10. As one of the first UK HEIs to close post the introduction of the Quality Framework, the valuable lesson I learned was that quality enhancement is also important in what could be deemed a negative event.

A valuable insight reflected in Chapter 2, gained from reviewing the existing literature, is my identification of confusion in relation to definitions of key principles such as IBC and TNE and the lack of rigour in some quantitative studies. This made me cautious about the way I collected data for this study. I sought to find an established framework which I could use to provide validity. In Chapter 3 I sought to position myself as a researcher, whereby I found myself at the centre of the study as an insider practitioner. As such, when considering the most suitable research framework, I eventually identified that a case study would be most appropriate. Again, being aware of the potential weaknesses of a case study, it was important to mitigate these weaknesses and I therefore sought to follow the design and methods suggested by one of the most influential writers in case study research, Yin. The work of Yin (2017) offered a framework. However, I found that it did not fulfil my needs completely due to the main source I used for data collection being reliant on continuous monitoring. Consequently I developed a hybrid, using the work of Yin (1994, 2002 and 2017) then supplementing it with that of Stake (1995), which was better suited to my narrative interpretative approach.

Using this hybrid framework provided a structure which allowed me to capture and analyse data which I could then use to identify quality enhancement opportunities.

### **Research Question 1:**

#### **What lessons may be learned from opening, managing and closing an IBC?**

Risk identification in relation to the setting of this research within an IBC has been based on learning lessons from other practitioners. This approach has been used by other practitioners, such as Gill (2012) and more recently Hill and Thabet (2018).

The most recent work supports my view that much has been written from an external

perspective and there are only a few longitudinal studies examining the development of an IBC over time (Hill and Thabet, 2018). My research continues this sharing of experience and should allow my fellow practitioners to learn lessons from this case study example. This is a valuable part of risk identification.

As a result of living through four years of an IBC I have learned the importance of moving away from a blame culture and ensuring that the focus moved to learning from experiences. This has been facilitated with the shift to continuous monitoring and a change in mind set to ensure that quality management is seen as a positive rather than negative experience. By focusing on 'what went well, even better if...' it is possible to ensure compliance with quality assurance whilst at the same time identifying quality enhancement opportunities.

### 5.2.1 Recommendations

Based on my research and lived through experience, I confirm that I have found learning lessons to be a good way of assisting with the identification of risks associated with IBCs. I recommend that all practitioners involved in this area continue to share their experiences so that others can benefit from this knowledge. This is a view supported by the QAA (Barnes, 2014) who confirmed that 'we can all learn from each other'.

The potential reputational risk associated with IBCs is such that all UK HEIs should work together to maintain the good reputation of UK Higher Education, as confirmed by Anthony McClaran, chief executive of the QAA (2012). Reports on TNE should 'intend to inform students, support institutions and maintain the good reputation of UK higher education worldwide'. This is further illustrated in The Times Higher Education 2014 World University Rankings, which show that UK universities occupy

3 out of the top 10 universities in the World.

A weakness of what has been written in the area of quality assurance has been identified by Knight and Liu (2017) '*...the quality assurance research focuses primarily on TNE in general and is not specific to one of the four main modes*'. Hence the importance of my research specifically focusing on the IBC mode. This research has sought to provide an insight to fellow practitioners of the life cycle of an IBC, additionally, the Lessons Learned Log approach could be used in all forms of TNE or general educational provision. By identifying issues at the earliest opportunity it is much easier to defuse, if there is a problem or change if necessary.

More cross-geographical research should be completed in this area and this is a view supported by O'Mahony who states that more cross national collaboration on TNE research is necessary (2014:37). Additionally, Keay, May, O'Mahony, (2014) confirm the importance of communities of practice in the area of TNE.

Additionally, if a Lessons Learned Log is made available and kept by the communities of practice this could be updated by practitioners, allowing a live learning forum and sharing of practice.

In relation to mitigating risk it is important to review the positioning of an IBC. The introduction to closer regulation introduced by Chapter B10 therefore I would agree with the work of Healey (2015a). However, I would update the work to show that the more 'control' is handed to the partner the higher the risks are. Therefore I would suggest that once an IBC has matured and the content of the modules is 'localised', the local tutors have a greater degree of control. This supports the view of Armstrong (2007).

However, if continuous monitoring takes place the degree of control remains tight

which consequently

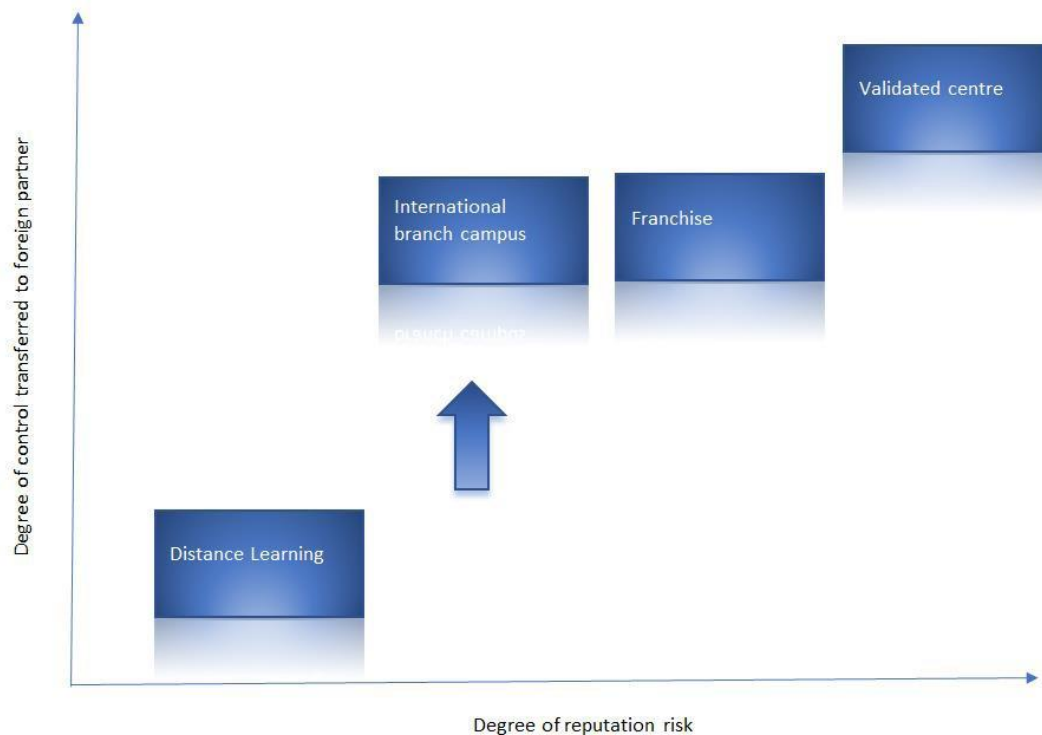


Figure 22. Degree of reputational risk at an IBC Healey (2014) See Figure 3 before (updated by Houlton 2018)

reverts the position of the IBC back to Healey's original placing as lower risk, just above that of distance learning. Since the UK HEI's name is clearly associated with the IBC, managing quality is a priority in this form of TNE in order to avoid reputational risk. The insight I gained from closing an IBC and the awareness of very high reputational risk encouraged me to keep very tight control over the management, so as to minimise reputational risk. Consequently with Healey's graph in mind, by ensuring that control was not transferred, the degree of reputational risk was reduced, contributing to a smooth closure which was compliant with quality assurance.

Additionally, with the focus of the QAA Quality Framework shifting toward quality enhancement this was an important feature of closing, ensuring that students were

not disadvantaged by the decision to close.

### **5.3 . Research Question 2:**

#### **How does the shift to continuous monitoring assist in identifying quality enhancement opportunities?**

The relevance of continuous monitoring not only allows a move away from ‘name and shame’ as identified by Gosling and D’Andrea (2001) to a more positive mechanism of capturing data for quality assurance purposes, additionally, it provides a platform to identify quality enhancement opportunities.

#### **5.3.1 Recommendations**

Quality enhancement forms an important part of the Quality Framework.

Quality should be viewed as a positive rather than a negative element and gathering data in a continuous format [Lessons Learned Log] rather than the traditional annual monitoring approach allows issues to be identified at an early stage. By reviewing ‘what went well’ at the IBC it was also possible to consider ‘even better if...’ as illustrated by the evolving delivery pattern, culminating in the increased role of local tutors. This was used as a form of data collection by introducing these aspects on the module evaluation form.

When working in a new environment, such as TNE, it is important that monitoring is a continuous process rather than based on an annual review. This allows risks to be identified and lessons learned immediately, allowing the student experience to be enhanced. The reputation of all UK HEIs is potentially at stake and consequently a reactive as well as proactive, transparent system which provides a clear audit trail is necessary.

It is important that students at the IBC are considered to be similar to TNE students



rather than to international students studying in the UK, since they are not immersed in UK culture; they are not in *'the bubble'* (Healey, 2015c:395). Consequently, additional support is required in relation to English Language and study skills since the concept of 'Learning Outcomes' and academic English is not part of the environment in which most students have previously studied. Once the additional study skills and academic English were introduced at the case study IBC, student performance improved.

In relation to the curriculum there is a 2 step approach needed at the IBC:

1. The curriculum must be relevant. Consequently the precursor is that the UK HEI must have an internationalised curriculum, as supported by Coelen (2012) and Caruana (2008). The necessity to internationalise fulfils the requirements of the global marketplace HEIs are now working in (Rizvi and Lingard, 2000). Students at the IBC could be considered as 'glocal', namely 'people with global aspirations, but needing to stay local (Choudaha, 2013).
2. Once internationalised it is important to 'localise' and provide the relevant context ensuring that content fulfils the learning outcomes but is also relevant to the student body (Shams and Huisman, 2012).

At an IBC, managing expectations is important for all stakeholders, and students especially should know what to expect before they enrol. Lessons should be learned from the QAA UAE review which said:

*'Only two providers, Heriot-Watt and Middlesex, are readily recognisable as branch campuses in including the range of facilities a student would expect of a campus in the UK. (2014:16).*

Open days should be held where all potential students and their parents are invited to meet with current students and timetables are made available, clearly showing the commitment required to study at the IBC. Parents are an important stakeholder in

the IBC setting. Additionally, I have seen that employers should also be engaged both at the beginning of the cycle to ensure that the curricula is relevant and during the delivery by having guest speakers so that students can see the relevance of their studies.

### **Has the QAA Quality Framework been a benefit or a burden in relation to managing an IBC?**

Since there was nothing previously written on this area and the case study UK HEI was one of the first to close an IBC post Chapter B10, it was helpful to have the clear guidance provided by the Indicators of the Quality Framework. Since Section B relates to 'assuring and enhancing academic quality', this supported the closure of the IBC. It was important to provide an audit trail of events illustrating how risks were identified and managed during this process.

#### **5.4.1 Recommendations**

Providing quality enhancement opportunities was an important consideration in assuring and enhancing the learning opportunities. An example of enhancement relates to the formation of a study group for those students transferring to Distance Learning awards, and the formative use of Turnitin.

Creating a transparent audit trail of events was crucial. It has to be remembered that students, quite rightly, are not happy with the decision to close an IBC. The lesson I learned was to be open and clear with the information provided, ensuring that where possible, they were the 'first to know' what was happening [e.g. speak to the students face to face prior to any press release being made]. Listening to their concerns was important and providing solutions to their concerns where possible was a priority [e.g. ensuring students knew exactly how and when they could

complete their studies].

## 5.5 Conclusion

As a member of a community of practice I have been supported through my research journey. Sharing experiences and learning from each other has enriched my learning experience within an educational research setting, and I have sought to

*‘research within a specific practical situation carried out by practitioners to solve clearly identified problems in order to improve’ (Burton and Bartlett, 2009:4).*

As a result of this study I delivered a conference paper at The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education: A global forum on student well-being and outcomes in higher education. Mission Possible? The International Quest to Define and Improve Student Success (Dubai, November 2018). My paper was entitled ‘Lessons learned from closing an IBC: How to support student success using the UK QAA Quality Framework’. As a result of this presentation I have been asked by UK QAA to deliver a webinar on this area on their behalf in early 2019.

As a practitioner in a work-based setting (Anderson and Herr, 1999), I was seeking to improve my own practice with a view also to improving practice for the benefit of others (Dadds and Hart, 2001). I have done this by reflecting on my experiences within the IBC and interpreted those experiences.

The setting for my research, namely a case study example, was appropriate since this is how I initially learned lessons from other practitioners and benefited from their knowledge and insight. Consequently, requests are still being made for case study examples over the period of this study, by practitioners such as Chalmers (2011) and OBHE Garret et al (2017) hence the relevance and justification for this method is still extant.

Through this experience I have evolved as a practitioner researcher or, perhaps

more accurately, as a scholar practitioner starting my journey as a 'reflective practitioner' (Schon, 1987:27) and progressing through my experiences to be a 'scholar', namely one who studies it [as I did initially to learn lessons from other case study examples], then to a 'practitioner', namely one who does it [as I did in the IBC setting] (McLintock, 2004).

Anderson and Jones (2000) confirm that educational leadership and an insider approach should improve my own practice and my community of practice. I have gained knowledge and experience through my research and practice.

The important shift to a risk-based approach renders practitioners responsible for identifying risk. An effective way of doing so is to share experiences of other practitioners. Having identified risks, it is important to provide a clear audit trail to prove quality assurance measures have been met with the additional focus on continual monitoring to ensure the student experience is enhanced, thus protecting the reputation of all UK HEIs.

Using the McLaughlin 1996 taken from Herr & Anderson (2014) quadrant approach, it is important to identify both the information required in Quadrant II and who 'does know' and learn from it; Quadrant IV was the most challenging since little was known in advance, therefore using a Quality Framework provided a useful precedent. However, this is my contribution to knowledge which I trust my fellow community of practice can learn from. My research journey will be complete when I fulfil the requirements of Quadrant I by sharing the new knowledge I have gained through my reflective practice with my community of practice. This is illustrated below:

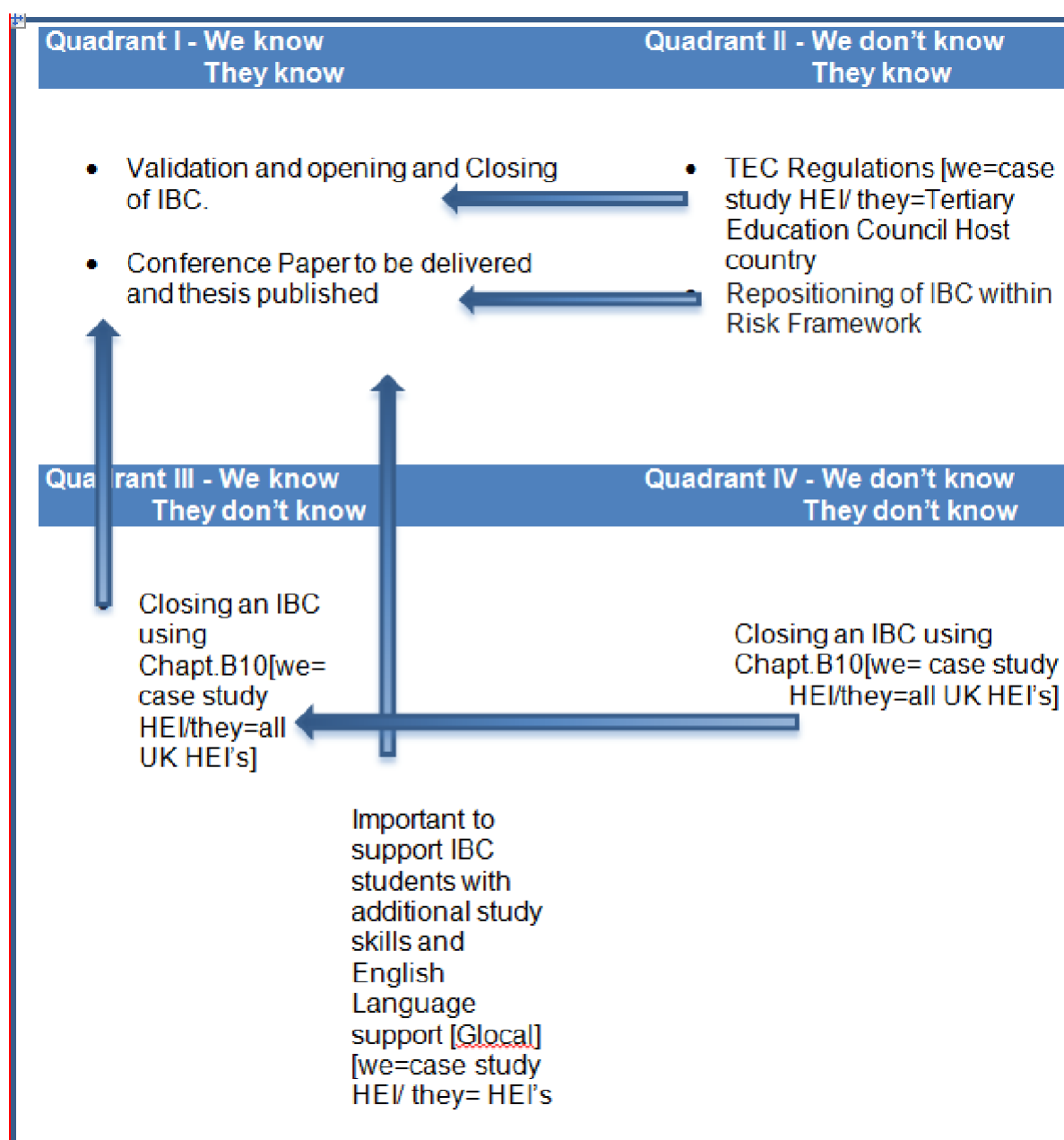


Figure 23 –Updated Quadrant of Learning to confirm learning progress – See Figure 5

This framework allowed me to audit my journey of learning, by tracking my development from quadrant II, IV and III to the conclusion of quadrant I. Critically it allowed me to identify the emerging themes from my research in a pragmatic way as circumstances evolved.

## Original Contribution from my research

### 5.6 Lesson Learned Log

The ability to continuously monitor delivery of educational provision is an efficient way to both ensure quality assurance compliance but also perhaps more importantly identification of quality enhancement opportunities. By changing the way in which we ask for feedback allows quality to be seen as a positive experience rather than just asking what was wrong. Continuous monitoring should feed in to formal quality processes, it should be a 'live' document which can be updated at any time. If there is something going wrong it is important to have a mechanism to identify this and also provide a solution rather than merely log an issue. The motivation for providing solutions should be to provide student enhancement opportunities, as academics we have a duty of care to ensure that the student experience is as good as we can make it. The QAA Code states that the equivalence of academic standards is the basis of quality assurance, I submit that the basis of quality enhancement should provide as close as possible an equivalent student experience which includes ensuring that the curriculum is relevant, in that it is both internationalised and localised and that when considering student feedback one should consider, what went well, even better if. Thus encouraging student participation in quality enhancement. The QAA introduced a new quality code which will be implemented in July 2019 in England. The terminology has shifted to include 'reasonably comparable' (QAA 2018) which I feel is a more realistic expectation, the new code also asks 'Have you considered?' which supports the Lessons Learned Log approach which should identify 'even better if.....' opportunities for quality enhancement. As a post-script to this study the Revised Quality Code which is due to be implemented in August 2019 disappointingly removes the emphasis of quality enhancement to HEI's in England. It will still be compulsory for HEI's in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland that 'Common Practices' focus on quality enhancement HEI's in England '*may wish to work towards these*' [QAA The Revised Quality Code for Higher Education 2018 <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>]. This I feel is a retrograde step and could form part of a

new study to consider if the proposed changes improve the reputation of UK HEI's.

A further original contribution from this research is the development of a checklist based on my experiential learning and professional practice of how to use the QAA Quality Code to identify quality enhancement opportunities when closing an IBC. Since this is the first IBC to close subsequent to the introduction of the QAA Quality Code this should fill a gap in existing knowledge.

### Checklist

1. Consider the timing of the decision to close – try to limit any new admissions. Make it prior to the commencement of a Semester. Remember, a decision to close can be made in advance of communicating it e.g. decision to close, June; therefore no new intake Semester 1, September; communicated December [this allows work to be carried on behind the scenes to ensure smooth closure].
2. A detailed audit trail, of all activities is required to minimise exposure to risk and potential claims.
3. A high level strategic committee should be set up with representatives from the OVC and operational staff, including the Academic Director of the IBC. An Exit Strategy should be developed to ensure compliance with appropriate Quality Frameworks e.g. Chapter B10 UK.
4. Identify key stakeholders who need to be informed of the decision to close e.g. government representatives in the host country, quality agencies, PRSBs, students, press, etc. Ensure the order of disclosure is agreed and a single point of contact appointed within the HEI to deal with requests for further information. It is important that there is consistency in the responses.
5. Students should be the first to be formally told of the closure and provided with a copy of the press release in advance, so that they are informed and prepared for the

announcement. Ideally, this should be face to face with a senior member of the HEI.

Additionally, they should be accompanied by another member of the HEI who they know.

At this point an overview of the exit plan should be shared with students, managing their expectations.

6. Each student should have a one to one meeting where their individual exit plan is discussed and confirmed. Opportunities for retakes/resits should be clearly stated. If they are unable to complete their award due to the closure all options should be identified and a date agreed by which they should confirm their choice, e.g. transfer to distance learning etc., in writing.
7. Chapter B10 encourages a risk-based approach. Consequently, a risk assessment should be carried out as part of the decision-making process around closure. High reputational risk is present when closure is announced. Therefore, the exit strategy should be robust.
8. Chapter B10 Indicator 9 'Degree awarding bodies ensure that adequate contingency plans are in place against the possibility that a delivery organisation becomes insolvent, ceases trading, or an agreement is terminated for some other reason and it has to assume responsibility for **teaching out** a programme'. It further states 'A range of solutions may be possible for teaching out the programme. Only in **exceptional cases**, and with the express agreement of the students involved, is the awarding authority transferred to a third party degree-awarding body.' Indicator 11 says

'Degree-awarding bodies are responsible for the academic standards of all credit and qualifications granted in their name. This responsibility is **never delegated**'

[http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/chapter-b10\\_-managing-higher-education-provision-with-others.pdf?sfvrsn=8c02f781\\_8](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/chapter-b10_-managing-higher-education-provision-with-others.pdf?sfvrsn=8c02f781_8)

Options to 'teach out' include:

- a. Transferring to UK campus [subject to host country restrictions, liability to pay all costs of transfer including fees, flights, living costs];
- b. Distance Learning;



- c. Transfer to other UK HEIs in the host country [once mapping complete and formal agreement of transfer signed].

9. Chapter B10 encourages **Quality Enhancement** which should be considered to support the closure of the IBC. Examples include:

- a. Engage alumni to provide work placement opportunities and general support. An alumni dinner was provided after the final in-country graduation ceremony. This engaged alumni and introduced them to current students.
- b. Students who were not able to complete their studies due to the closure of the IBC were invited to the final in-country graduation ceremony and took the role of ushers. This allowed them to be part of the event and feel part of the experience. They were then introduced to the alumni at the evening alumni dinner. They were invited to attend the ceremony the following year in the UK and were provided with free accommodation to encourage attendance.
- c. Students who were not able to complete their studies due to the closure and were transferred to the Distance Learning programme, formed study groups to provide mutual support, momentum and encouragement. A draft study plan encouraging them to meet and discuss the seminar questions as a group was provided. Additionally, students were encouraged to host and take responsibility for seminars, having an informal seminar at their homes prior to the online seminar.
- d. Books from the IBC library should be given to the study groups to support their research and preparation for seminars.

I trust that this checklist will add to the bank of knowledge available to my community of practice. Ideally this could be kept as a live document as part of continuous monitoring and added to by the community of practice, supporting the view that this research offers a generalised opportunity, providing a prompt to other practitioners.

Since this is a niche area of academic study, I would recommend the further development of the scholar practitioner network. The lessons learned by those ‘who do it’ should add to the knowledge bank of those ‘who research it’, with the added development of the hybrid scholar practitioner who does both. As a hybrid scholar I have developed my personal practice and expertise.

## 5.6 Recommendations

1. UK quality had to improve to protect the reputation of all UK HEIs – the introduction of Chapter B10 emphasised a risk-based approach and the importance of quality enhancement. HEI’s policies and procedures should reflect this to ensure compliance with Chapter B10 and host country regulations. This QAA Framework offers benefits to all UK HEIs.
2. It is important to be able to identify risks. This can be done in 2 stages
  - i. pre-event: e.g. opening an IBC – learn lessons from case study examples from other practitioners who have ‘lived through’ the experience.
  - ii. during event: need a mechanism to continually monitor and capture any issues with a move away from annual monitoring towards continual monitoring, for example a Lessons Learned Log. The earlier a risk or issue is identified, the more likely it is that matters can be resolved and the reputation of the UK HEI is protected.
3. Having identified and resolved issues, the Lessons Learned Log should be updated and when a new risk or issue has been identified, e.g. how to use Chapter B10 as a structure to close an IBC, then a centrally held, live Lessons Learned Log should be updated and shared with the community of practice.
4. Carefully monitor student performance to ensure that any student enhancement amendments do add value to student achievement. A duty of care exists between the HEI and students, the

motivation for enhancement should ensure that decisions are made which facilitate improved student performance.

5. The development of a single international community of practice made up of scholar practitioners, which provides a conduit between research and practice. An international network should be developed with membership growth in the USA, the UK and Australia, which are key players. Joint research across jurisdictions is important for sharing the knowledge bank and mitigating exposure to risk for all HEIs. Known as Education Abroad Scholar Practitioner [EASP] in the US, with Professional Certification – QUIP – quality improvement plan/ compared to our quality enhancement. This should be extended to the rest of the world.

## 5.7 Summary

This research has been a journey which has benefited my own professional practice through experiential learning and will hopefully add to the knowledge of my community of practice.

Quality was seen as an administrative or managerial responsibility, whereas the introduction of the QAA Quality Framework and the shift to a risk-based approach with an emphasis on quality enhancement should be used by academics themselves to engage in the quality process.

Through continuous monitoring there is an opportunity to gain data in a positive manner by looking not just at what has not gone well, but also at what did go well, and could be even better if... This engages not just academics in the process but also students. If they can see that they are being listened to and that changes are introduced which improve their position, they are more likely to engage in the process. There is always a risk associated with change, so any changes made should be carefully monitored and if it can be seen that there is a negative impact against an agreed parameter, then the possibility of reverting to the original position should be considered.

In relation to the final stage of case study research (Yin, 2017) I will share my research. I have

already done this by delivering a Conference Paper at an International Forum run by the OBHE in November 2018. And I have been asked by QAA to run a webinar on this area which I will deliver in early 2019.

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## Appendix A

### Extract taken from QAA Quality Code

# Appendix 1 - The Expectation and Indicators: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others

## The Expectation

The Quality Code sets out the following Expectation about managing the delivery of learning opportunities with others, which degree-awarding bodies, and higher education providers without degree-awarding powers that are organising provision by third parties, are required to meet:

*Degree-awarding bodies take ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with organisations other than the degree-awarding body are implemented securely and managed effectively.*

## The Indicators of sound practice

### Indicator 1

A strategic approach to delivering learning opportunities with others is adopted. Appropriate levels of resources (including staff) are committed to the activities to ensure that the necessary oversight is sustained.

### Indicator 2

Governance arrangements at appropriate levels are in place for all learning opportunities which are not directly provided by the degree-awarding body. Arrangements for learning to be delivered, or support to be provided, are developed, agreed and managed in accordance with the formally stated policies and procedures of the degree-awarding body.

### Indicator 3

Policies and procedures ensure that there are adequate safeguards against financial impropriety or conflicts of interest that might compromise academic standards or the quality of learning opportunities. Consideration of the business case is conducted separately from approval of the academic proposal.

### Indicator 4

Degree-awarding bodies that engage with other authorised awarding bodies to provide a programme of study leading to a joint academic award satisfy themselves that they have the legal capacity to do so.

### *Indicator 5*

The risks of each arrangement to deliver learning opportunities with others are assessed at the outset and reviewed subsequently on a periodic basis. Appropriate and proportionate safeguards to manage the risks of the various arrangements are determined and put in place.

### *Indicator 6*

Appropriate and proportionate due diligence procedures are determined for each proposed arrangement for delivering learning opportunities with an organisation other than the degree-awarding body. They are conducted periodically to check the capacity of the other organisation to continue to fulfil its designated role in the arrangement.

### ***Indicator 7***

There is a written and legally binding agreement, or other document, setting out the rights and obligations of the parties, which is regularly monitored and reviewed. It is signed by the authorised representatives of the degree-awarding body (or higher education provider without degree-awarding powers arranging provision by a third party) and by the delivery organisation, support provider or partner(s) before the relevant activity commences.

### ***Indicator 8***

Degree-awarding bodies take responsibility for ensuring that they retain proper control of the academic standards of awards where learning opportunities are delivered with others. No serial arrangements are undertaken without the express written permission of the degree-awarding body which retains oversight of what is being done in its name.

### ***Indicator 9***

Degree-awarding bodies retain responsibility for ensuring that students admitted to a programme who wish to complete it under their awarding authority can do so in the event that a delivery organisation or support provider or partner withdraws from an arrangement or that the degree-awarding body decides to terminate an arrangement.

### ***Indicator 10***

All higher education providers maintain records (by type and category) of all arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others that are subject to a formal agreement.

### ***Indicator 11***

Degree-awarding bodies are responsible for the academic standards of all credit and qualifications granted in their name. This responsibility is never delegated. Therefore, degree-awarding bodies ensure that the standards of any of their awards involving learning opportunities delivered by others are equivalent to the standards set for other awards that they confer at the same level. They are also consistent with UK national requirements.

### ***Indicator 12***

When making arrangements to deliver a programme with others, degree-awarding bodies fulfil the requirements of any professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) that has

approved or recognised the programme or qualification, in relation to aspects of its delivery and any associated formal agreements. The status of the programme or qualification in respect of PSRB recognition is made clear to prospective students.

### *Indicator 13*

Degree-awarding bodies approve module(s) and programmes delivered through an arrangement with another delivery organisation, support provider or partner through processes that are at least as rigorous, secure and open to scrutiny as those for assuring quality and academic standards for programmes directly provided by the degree-awarding body.

### *Indicator 14*

Degree-awarding bodies clarify which organisation is responsible for admitting and registering a student to modules or programmes delivered with others, and ensure that admissions are consistent with their own admissions policies.

### *Indicator 15*

Degree-awarding bodies ensure that delivery organisations involved in the assessment of students understand and follow the assessment requirements approved by the degree-awarding body for the components or programmes being assessed in order to maintain its academic standards. In the case of joint, dual/double and multiple awards or for study abroad and student exchanges, degree-awarding bodies agree with their partners on the division of assessment responsibilities and the assessment regulations and requirements which apply.

### *Indicator 16*

Degree-awarding bodies retain ultimate responsibility for the appointment, briefing and functions of external examiners. The external examining procedures for qualifications where learning opportunities are delivered with others are consistent with the degree awarding body's approved practices.

### *Indicator 17*

Degree-awarding bodies ensure that modules and programmes offered through other delivery organisations, support providers or partners are monitored and reviewed through procedures that are consistent with, or comparable to, those used for modules or programmes provided directly by them.

### *Indicator 18*

Degree-awarding bodies ensure that they have effective control over the accuracy of all public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to learning opportunities delivered with others which lead to their awards. Information is produced for prospective and current students which is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. Delivery organisations or support providers are provided with all information necessary for the effective delivery of the learning or support.

### *Indicator 19*

When degree-awarding bodies make arrangements for the delivery of learning opportunities with others, they ensure that they retain authority for awarding certificates and issuing detailed records of study in relation to student achievement. The certificate and/or record of academic achievement states the principal language of instruction and/or assessment where this is not English.<sup>22</sup> Subject to any overriding statutory or other legal provision in any relevant jurisdiction, the certificate and/or the record of achievement records the name and location of any other higher education provider involved in the delivery of the programme of study.<sup>23</sup> Where information relating to the language of study or to the name and location of the delivery organisation or partner is recorded on the record of achievement only, the certificate refers to the existence of this formal record.



## Appendix B

### Extract from Lessons Learned

|   | New Issue   | Action(s) Required   | By Whom         | By When                               | Resources needed with costings   | Success Criteria Expected Outcome  | Current Status                                 |
|---|---|--|-----------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| 1 | Enrolment – students not on the system                                  | Need cut off date to enrol so able to ensure students are on the system.                                       | CS/ LJH         | Agree date 2 weeks prior to induction | STaR Office to assist  | All students to be enrolled prior or during induction. Skype with STaR to deal with any issues | Arranged Skype with STaR during induction 2013 |
| 2 | Access to IT – unable to access and log on                              | Unable to access electronic resources due to non- enrolment  | IT services/ SR | Prior to induction as 1 above         | As 1 above   | As 1 above   | As 1 above                                     |
| 3 | Timetabling – Sundays not appropriate for classes                       | Amend teaching schedule to avoid Sunday classes  | LJH             | Oct 2012                              | None   | Agree new schedule   | Will apply to 2013 too                         |
| 4 | Timetabling –LLB full time students want classes in the day not evening | Review timetable. Not currently possible without local tutors being available which they are not at the moment | CS              | Ongoing                               | Need to appoint local tutor – consider fractional appointment? Or second UoW tutor | Have some day time classes in 2013   | Ongoing  |
| 5 | Timetabling – LLM ICFL  | Review timetable –   |                 |                                       |  |  |  |

|   |   |   |     |          |   |  |   |
|---|---|---|-----|----------|---|--|---|
|   | request teaching days too long  | Amend to spread teaching over more days which is possible since tutors are present over 2 weekends so trapped time. | LJH | Oct 2012 | Tutors from UoW present so able to spread teaching over more evenings so weekends shorter | Agreed new schedule                          | Will also apply to 2013                         |
| 6 | Enrolment – information being sent to students some state they do not receive it. | Copy in IBC to welcome emails to students so record of information may be kept centrally                            | LJH | Nov 2012 | Accurate records to be maintained and consideration made to Data Protection               | IBC copied in to emails sent to students     | Will also apply to 2013                         |
| 7 | Evaluation Form required – UoW form not relevant new form to be drafted           | ILE to draft appropriate form   | LJH | Ongoing  | ILE unable to assist due to restructuring form created by 2 Schools involved [LSSC/SEd]   | Consistent form to be used on all programmes | Will also apply to 2013 and new Schools joining |

|                     | Issues Carried Forward                | Action(s) Required   | Original Date Raised | By Whom          | By When  | Success Criteria Expected Outcome   | Current Status |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|--|----------------------|------------------|--|---|----------------|
| 1                   | 4. timetabling to have classes in day | Appoint local staff maybe consider fractional appointment<br>Timetabled some 'classes' to allow students self study time these were not taken advantage of in IT labs etc. – Tutor is required not just time or space. | Sept 2012            | Student Reps LLB | Seek to add some day time classes 2013                               | More staff presence   | Ongoing        |
| 2                   | 1. Enrolment & 2. IT access           | Ensure induction for 2013 has support from UoW via Skype   | Sept 2012            | Student Reps     | Induction Sept 2013 for new students and Induction Oct for returners | All students enrolled and able to access electronic resources prior to end of induction | Ongoing        |
| Name: LJ Houlton    |                                       |  |                      |                  |  |   |                |
| Signature           |                                       |  |                      |                  |  |   |                |
| Date: February 2013 |                                       |  |                      |                  |  |   |                |

|                  | Issues Carried Forward                                       | Action(s) Required  | Original Date Raised | By Whom      | By When          | Success Criteria Expected Outcome                 | Current Status |
|------------------|--|---|----------------------|--------------|------------------|---|----------------|
| 12               | Dissertation supervision not consistent                      | Pro forma to be issued to allow tracking of supervision<br>Meeting with supervising tutors to explain process   | January 2013         | Student Reps | On-going         | Pro-forma to be issued to next cohort of students | On-going       |
| 14               | Guest speakers to be identified to deliver classes/ seminars | Identify list of appropriate guest speakers and seek to have a minimum of one per semester  | February 2013        | Student Reps | On-going CS      | Guest Speaker to deliver this semester            | On-going       |
| 25               | Extra Curricula activities requested                         | Need to develop ethos of a branch campus and provide opportunities for students to feel part of UoW. Students Union will be part on induction – seeking to develop interaction with students at Wolverhampton | March 2013           | Student Reps | On-going CS      | Extra Curricula activities to be provided.        | On-going       |
| 22               | Campus Building not ready                                    | Date of completion to be agreed and students to be informed.  | June 2013            | Student Reps | On-going CS/Dina | Move into new campus building.                    | On-going       |
| Name: LJ Houlton |  |   |                      |              |                  |   |                |
| Signature        |  |   |                      |              |                  |   |                |
| Date: July 2013  |  |   |                      |              |                  |   |                |

## Appendix C

### Seminar Instructions

#### **Seminar One: Agreement**

Date:

Chair:

Present:

#### **Self-study Questions**

1. Distinguish an offer from an invitation to treat, using cases to illustrate. Working in small groups, prepare a presentation to present your findings to the whole group.

Group Answer:

Presented By:

2. Discuss whether an advertisement on a website of sale of goods for sale at a particular price is an offer or an invitation to treat?

Group Answer:

Presented by:

3. Samuel, an antiques dealer, has just acquired a three hundred year old table. He is short of money and wants to sell the table. He wants to get the best price he can. He knows he needs to give some indication of the price he wants, but does not wish to be bound by this.

- a) If he places an advertisement in the local paper, what legal principle would apply? Which of the following cases would you use to support your argument and why?

*Partridge v Crittenden* [1968] 2 All ER 421

*Grainger & Son v Gough* [1896] AC 325

*Carlill v Carbolic Smoke Ball Co* [1892] 2 QB 484

- b) Which cases could you use to argue that the advertisement is an offer? Explain the reasons for your answer

Group Answer:

Presented By:

4. Read the case of *Grainger & Sons v Gough* [1896] AC 325. Explain what is meant by the 'limited stock' argument.

Group Answer:

Presented By:

5. Read the following cases:

*Clifton v Palumbo* [1944] 2 All ER 497

*Bigg v Boyd Gibbins* [1971] 2 All ER 183

*Butler Machine Tool Co Ltd v Ex-Cell-O Corp Ltd* [1979] 1 All ER 965

*Gibson v Manchester City Council* [1979] 1 All ER 972

What was the legal principle in each of these cases? Do any of these cases conflict with each other?

Group Answer:

Presented By:

6. Read Lord Denning's judgment in *Butler Machine Tool Co Ltd v Ex-Cell-O Corp Ltd* [1979] 1 All ER 965. Did the other judges in the case agree with him? What do you think of Lord Denning's views?

Group Answer:

Presented By:

7. What is meant by the 'mirror-image' rule?

Group Answer:

Presented By:

8. Distinguish between *Hyde v Wrench* (1840) 3 Beav 334 and *Stevenson v McLean* (1880) 5 QBD 346. Apply the principles in these cases to the following scenario:

Able wished to sell his copy of Richards, Law of Contract. He met Cando in the Students' Union Bar and offered to sell the textbook to him for £10. Cando, who was short of money replied, 'I'm a bit strapped for cash at the minute. I've only got £5 as I just spent £5 on the last round, but Sarah, my girlfriend, is sure to have some cash. Is it okay if I come around later this evening?' When Cando knocked on Able's door several hours later, he was told that the deal was off. Advise Cando

Group Answer:

Presented By:

### **Seminar Questions**

1. Eve telephoned Adam offering to sell the crop of apples in her orchard for £100 on the condition that Adam picked the apples within the next three days. Adam said that he would need to find out if his two friends, Sid and Lucifer, would help him to pick them and so would ring Eve by 6.00 pm the next day with his answer.

Adam was able to persuade only Sid to help him. Adam rang Eve the next morning and left a message on her telephone answering machine saying: "I accept the offer, but in case I don't manage to pick all the apples, would you agree if I paid you £10 per 100 kilos for the apples picked? If I don't hear from you, I'll assume that this arrangement is satisfactory."

That same day, Eve met Lucifer, who told her that he had been asked by Adam to pick the apples, but had refused. She replied to him that she assumed, therefore, that Adam would not want the apples, and that she would sell them to the local cider making company, which she did. The company sent its employees the next day to pick all the apples. Lucifer reported the conversation to Adam. Adam arrived at Eve's orchard the day after he had sent the telephone message and, on finding that the apples had been sold, demanded damages for Eve's breach of contract.

Advise Adam.

Group Answer:

Presented By:

### **Instructions for Informal Seminars**

Each student must act as Chair for one seminar, the **role of the Chair is to:**

Confirm time, room and date of seminar with the rest of the group

Take notes and confirm the group answer

Identify a different member of the group to answer a question

Hand in the completed form to the tutor at the start of the formal seminar

### **Each student must:**

Prepare their answers in advance of the informal seminar

Be prepared to discuss your findings with the group

Be prepared to answer one question at the formal seminar, you will be allocated the question you will be delivering at the informal seminar.

Be prepared to discuss all answers at the formal seminar with your tutor.



## Appendix D

### Instructions to Tutors and Students

#### Students Study Information

Welcome to the International Branch Campus, choosing to study law is not an easy option! I hope you will find your studies interesting as well as challenging.

We have completed your introductory lectures and you should now be engaging with the materials on Global Wolf. If you have any problems accessing information please let us know, so that we can help resolve any issues.

You have your seminar schedule and it is important that you prepare appropriately for these. Seminars are a very important part of your study, the more preparation and reading you do the more you will get from the seminar.

#### Checklist:

- ✓ You should read all of the material on Global Wolf for each topic before the seminar
- ✓ You should read the relevant chapters in the key text books
- ✓ You should research the area and look at secondary sources such as journal articles
- ✓ You should answer the seminar questions in writing and submit them to the seminar tutor 24 hours before the seminar. [it is important you practice answering questions this will prepare you for your assessments]

- ✓ Be prepared to discuss the key legal principles and key cases relevant to each topic
- ✓ Be prepared to answer the questions in the seminar materials
- ✓ Prepare a list of any questions you may have to ensure you fully understand each topic area and raise these with the seminar tutor.

In your final assessment you will need to understand each of the areas covered in the seminars, it is not about having a good memory.

Many thanks

Lorraine Houlton

### **Seminar Tutors**

Your role is very important to the success of the students and delivery of the programme, if you require any further information or guidance please let me know [L.houlton@wlv.ac.uk].

Managing the students expectations is important as such please see the Students Study Information so that you can help ensure that students are engaging with their studies.

#### **Checklist**

If students do not send their answers in advance of the seminar, or the answers show little preparation, please make a note and let Sue have a list of their names so that we can follow this up [email address]

- ✓ If you are unsure, or disagree with any of the answers provided by the Module Leader then please contact them directly to discuss the matter. Please do not raise this with the students, this could cause confusion for them. If the response provided by the module leader still causes concern please contact me directly.

- ✓ If you have any access issues to the materials please contact Lesley at the STaR office [email address]
- ✓ Please can you go through all of the questions in the seminar focusing on the questions which are causing concern. By looking very quickly at the answers submitted by the students it should be possible to identify which questions have been causing problems, and which have been answered correctly and therefore can be dealt with more quickly.
- ✓ For the final 15 minutes of the seminar please can you briefly introduce the next topic area by reminding the students where the materials are on wolf global and remind them of the key principles and cases.
- ✓ Please could you complete a mid- module evaluation form [template to be forwarded] this allows us to identify any issues there may be at subject level and hopefully allow extra assistance to be available if necessary.

Many thanks

Lorraine Houlton

## Appendix E

### Summary of Final Academic Year of INTERNATIONAL BRANCH CAMPUS 2016

| Month          | Activity  | Audit Trail/ Document Source  | QAA Indicator or Regulation   |
|----------------|---|---|---|
| June 2015      | Decision to close International Branch Campus made by Case study HEI  | Minutes from OVC/ Governors   | Main Expectation – ‘ultimate responsibility’  |
| September 2015 | Moved to new premises leased by Case study HEI  | Letter from TEC confirming premises acceptable  | TEC(Registration of Post-Secondary Education Institutions) Regulations 2005. Regulation 8 (b)(iii)                    |
| October 2015   | Flying Faculty – introductory lectures  | Schedule sent to students, non-attendance followed up to ensure maximum attendance  | Indicator 9<br>‘retain responsibility ..ensure students can complete’   |
| November 2015  | Local Tutors provide teaching and seminar support   | Schedule sent to students, non-attendance followed up to ensure maximum attendance  | Indicator 11<br>‘responsible for the academic standards’  |
| December 2015  | Case study HEI Registrar meet with students to confirm closure of INTERNATIONAL BRANCH CAMPUS 7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> December Press Release announce closure of INTERNATIONAL | All students invited to attend meeting, letter given to each student, non-attendees letter sent to their registered address and email sent. Copy of press release provided to each student in advance of publication Letters sent to TEC; British High Commission | Indicator 9<br>‘retain responsibility for ensuring students admitted to a program who wish to complete ...can do so.’ |

|               |  |   |   |
|---------------|--|---|---|
|               | BRANCH CAMPUS  |   |   |
| January 2016  | Flying Faculty - Revision Support<br>After assessments one to one meetings with each student confirming their profile and exit route   | Revision attendance monitored and students encouraged to attend. 1-2-1 meetings with each student, minutes taken. Students signed copy of letter confirming their selection of options. Any discrepancies on student profiles noted and investigated. | Indicator 9 and Indicator 11 and TEC(Registration of Post-Secondary Education Institutions) Regulations 2005. Regulation 9(d) |
| February 2016 | Deadline for confirmation by LLB students who were continuing their studies which option they were following for 2016/17<br>Local tutors provide teaching and seminar support  | All student written to confirming their option. Local tutors monitored attendance.  | TEC Guidelines for Post-Secondary overseas recognised accredited institutions Reg. 1.1.1                                      |
| March 2016    | Meeting with senior staff relating to Law provision with an Action Checklist completed ensuring revision in April is appropriate and in place. Liaise with students via email answering any questions/ dealing with any issues | Minutes of meetings, action checklist. Materials uploaded onto the VLE  | Main Expectation QAA  |
| April 2016    | Flying Faculty revision support<br>Revision lectures   | Revision support, included uploaded lectures from module leaders in the UK. Turnitin reports reviewed and explained   | Indicator 5 'appropriate and proportionate safeguards'  |

|             |  |  |   |
|-------------|--|--|---|
|             | uploaded   | individually, seeking to minimise Academic Misconduct  |   |
| May 2016    | Assessments UK HEI 'A' presentation to continuing students   | MEC completed examinations, papers sent back to the UK for marking and moderation.<br>Level 5 students invited to attend presentation explaining option of transferring to alternative UK HEI in host country  | Indicator 9<br>'range of solutions'   |
| June 2016   | Assessment Boards – identifying students requiring resits  | Student profiles identify resit students, students were then contacted and revision support provided   | Indicator 11<br>'equivalent standards'  |
| July 2016   | Flying Faculty Revision Support<br>Revision Lectures uploaded  | Timetable sent in advance to all students requiring resit/retake.<br>Ensuring clear which modules were needed and the mode of assessment.  | Indicator 9 and<br>Indicator 11 and<br>TEC(Registration of Post-Secondary Education Institutions) Regulations 2005. Regulation 9(d) |
| August 2016 | Assessment Boards – students completed Graduation in Host country attended by VC<br>Continuing students sent schedule for assessments and access to distance learning materials and on line support.<br>Students transferring to UK HEI 'A' details confirmed and additional fees paid directly to UK HEI 'A'<br>Study groups formed | All students with sufficient credits completed and invited to graduation in Host country.<br>Those with insufficient credits informed of next opportunity to complete their missing modules. Transferred to Distance Learning, ensure they can access materials. Administrative support available in country until 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2016, thereafter support from UK.<br>Study Group's set up, all students invited to meet at INTERNATIONAL BRANCH CAMPUS to ensure contact details were correct and everyone was known to each other. | Indicator 11<br>'equivalent standards'  |

|                |  |                            |  |
|----------------|--|----------------------------|--|
|                | for students transferring to Distance Learning at University of Wolverhampton. All contact details exchanged allowing students to contact all other students in Host country who were taking or resitting each module. These groups were encouraged to meet regularly and provide support for each other. Materials were made available. |                            |  |
| September 2016 | <p>International Branch Campus closed</p> <p>Alumni attended post-graduation dinner.</p> <p>Those students who did not have sufficient credits to graduate invited to be ushers to support the graduation.</p> <p>Text books given to study groups when library closed ensuring appropriate resources</p>                                | Formal notice sent to TEC. | Indicator 9<br>'ensure adequate contingency plans...if terminated.. has to assume responsibility for teaching out programme' |

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
|  | were available to provide student support. |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|

Table 17 Houlton (2018) Timeline Closure International Branch Campus :